MAXIMUMROCKNROLL

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TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

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- WARM BODIES – live
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- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP
- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- PIECE WAR – Apathy LP
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- V/A – Horrendous New Wave LP
- ОТДЕЛ САМОИСКОРЕНЕНИЯ – CD
- PUKE SPIT & GUTS – LP
- DUMPERS / PIGS – live

MATT BADENHOP

- SIEVEHEAD – Worthless Soul LP
- PIG//CONTROL – 12"
- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP
- AVT – Lo Queremos Todo EP
- TRAUMA HARNESS – EP
- BO!ROCK1 – EPs
- TARANTULA – I Live Free EP
- BLANK SPELL – Miasma LP
- DISSEKERAD – IV EP
- LUMPY & THE DUMPERS – live

MITCH CARDWELL

- PIECE WAR – Apathy LP
- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP
- CAVEMEN – Dog on a Chain EP
- BO!ROCK1 – EPs
- PUKE SPIT & GUTS – LP
- NATURAL CAUSES – LP
- WOTZIT – 10" / LIPUPS – EP
- WARM BODIES – live
- WARKRIME – live
- LUMPY & THE DUMPERS – live

ROBERT COLLINS

- GUADALUPE – live
- UNARM – live
- LOS CAÍDOS – live
- PIG//CONTROL – 12"
- CALIFAPUTA – live
- HEAT – live
- SMD – Born Against LP
- WOTZIT – Kiiiro 10"
- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- HIDINGINSIDEVICTIMS – live
- AVT – LP and EP

LAYLA GIBBON

- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- ОТДЕЛ САМОИСКОРЕНЕНИЯ – CD
- PIECE WAR – Apathy LP
- LUMPY & THE DUMPERS / WARM BODIES / MOZART / BLANKIE – live
- CHAIN & THE GANG – LP
- FRENCH VANILLA – CD
- V/A – Horrendous New Wave LP
- FRIED E.M. – EP / ERIK NERVOUS – 45
- LIFE'S BLOOD – LP
- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP

DAN GOETZ

- WARM BODIES – live
- XYLITOL – Is Toxic To Pigs?? EP
- LIFE'S BLOOD – LP
- UNARM – live
- BEATNIKS – live
- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- TARANTULA – I Live Free EP
- MALA LECHE – Pantallas EP
- JOINT D≠ – مخابرات / Intelligence LP
- SNAILS – No Time EP

GREG HARVESTER

- AVT – LP and EP
- MALA LECHE – Pantallas EP
- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP
- SHIT BLIMP – Basement Blues EP
- WOTZIT – Kiiiro 10"
- PIECE WAR – Apathy LP
- V/A – Horrendous New Wave LP
- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- SICK THOUGHTS – LP
- MEA CULPA / WARM BODIES – live

KENNY KAOS

- VIDEO ROUGE – 45
- BABY SHAKES – Turn It Up LP
- FAST CARS – 45
- UK GOLD – Auto Responder EP
- ERIK NERVOUS – 45
- PERVERTS AGAIN – 45
- DEAD ON THE WIRE – EP
- FLOWER ZOMBIES – 45
- THEE EVIL TWIN – 45
- THE CAVEMEN – Dog on a Chain EP

MARISSA MAGIC

- WARM BODIES / LUMPY & THE DUMPERS – live
- THE MALL – live
- FILE FOLDER – live
- MALA LECHE – Pantallas EP
- FRENCH VANILLA – CD
- MARK CONE – Now Showing EP
- FRIED E.M. – Coping EP
- SARCASM – Malarial Bog EP
- SNOUTS / RAGGED VEINS – live
- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP

SHIVAUN WATCHORN

- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- LIFE'S BLOOD – LP
- UNARM / KHIIS – live
- LUMPY & THE DUMPERS / WARM BODIES / BLANKIE – live
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- ENZYME – Abuse of Power EP

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- FRIED E.M. – Coping EP
- THE SKIDS – Crooked Cop EP
- SUBVERSIVE RITE – The Demos 12"
- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- THE CAVEMEN – Dog on a Chain EP
- DRONEZ / HUMANMANIA – split EP
- MALA LECHE – Pantallas EP
- PROCESS OF ELIMINATION – EP

REVIEWERS: Peter Avery, Mike Battleaxe, Daniel Becker, Brace Belden, Heather Blotto, Graham Booth, Julia Booz, Mitch Cardwell, Josh Carman, Robert Collins, Michael De Toffoli, Connor Duncan, Layla Gibbon, Dan Goetz, Greg Harvester, Ryan Hertel, Chris Hubbard, Ramsey Kanaan, Kenny Kaos, Ray Lujan, Allan McNaughton, Mikey Minicomix, Ryan Modee, Sean Nieves-Quiñones, Golnar Nikpour, Ben Paulsen, Langford Poh, Rotten Ron Ready, Camylle Reynolds, Jason Ryan, Fred Schrunk, Kenn Suto, Lena Tahmassian, Alex Turner, Max Wickham

COLUMNISTS: Neve Be, Bryony Beynon, Blow Blood, Imogen Binnie, Erika Elizabeth, Bradley Ellison, Felix Havoc, Mette Helms, Lefty Hooligan, Carolyn Keddy, Al Quint, Alex Sjoberg, Turbo & Gang, Andrew Underwood

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Wanna be a shitworker?
Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com .

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- FRENCH VANILLA – CD
- HIP PRIESTS – CD
- LITTERBUG – LP
- THE 99ERS – Pop Punk Girl CD
- PIECE WAR – Apathy LP
- RICHIE RAMONE – "I Fix This" 45

FRED SCHRUNK

- XYLITOL – Is Toxic to Pigs?? EP
- PROCESS OF ELIMINATION – EP
- MALA LECHE – Pantallas EP
- LEBENDEN TOTEN – Static! 12"
- LIFE'S BLOOD – LP
- SUBVERSIVE RITE – The Demos 12"
- SICK THOUGHTS – LP
- FRIED E.M. – Coping EP
- ANDY THE BAND – Carry On EP
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PHILLIPINES

Mutilated Noise
Makati City, Phillipines
Mutilateddistro@gmail.com

distro@maximumrocknroll.com
for info on carryingthe magazine

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Alice Bag at the Masque

FRONT COVER: Elix-R. Photo by Andi Harman

CONTRIBUTORS: Chris Bavaria, Anna Sofie Mørch Bendixen, Bruno Bronga, Arielle Burgdorf, E. Conner, Creg, Nico Djavanshir, Zoë Dodd, Ricardo Flores, Jesus Perez Gonzales, Matt Grace, Louis Hacinto, Andi Harman, Simo P. Julvi, Jukka Karihtala, Allan McNaughton, Jessica Mills, Veronica Mullen, John No, Nônô Noxx, Angela Owens, Mika Reckinnen, Alexander Sjöberg, Joyce Smith, Iinaroosa Viitanen

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ELIX-R......21

SACRIFICIO......26

ALICE BAG......31

DUMB FE5T......36

NO U TURN......38

FATIGUE......43

FIRST TIMERS......50

BIG MESS......52

NOTHING NICE TO SAY......56

RHANY TORRES......58

COLD INSTITUTION......63

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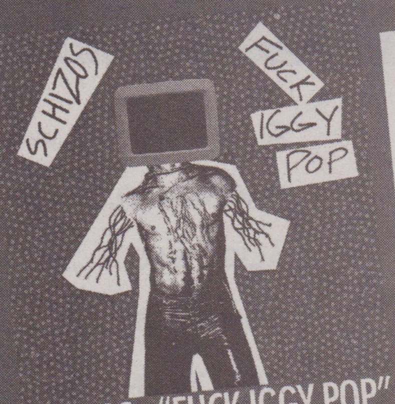
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SCHIZOS - "FUCK IGGY POP"

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COLUMNS

OVERAMPED
HARM REDUCTION FOR
THE MODERN WORLD

It's Not Just About the Drugs…

This month I am giving you all a break from my ranting and am featuring a guest columnist to impart some words of wisdom about life, death and survival in the face of the global drug war. Zoë Dodd has been a part of the Toronto hardcore punk scene since moving there in 1997 and is a longtime harm reduction and Hepatitis C worker and activist. Zoë has spent the last decade facilitating Hepatitis C support groups that are rooted in popular education and harm reduction. She was instrumental in developing a community-based model that prioritizes people who use drugs and are living with HIV / Hepatitis C coinfection. Zoë is a feminist, anti-capitalist, and drug-user activist.

As always, you can reach me at DearAuntieHazel@gmail.com.

Content Warning: drugs, overdose, drug war, overdose death.

I'm sitting next to my altar in my living room. It has now become the central place where I go to for comfort and ritual when people in my life die. I have a candle lit for my friend who just overdosed and died on Thursday. Rumours are circulating as to how she died, how people might have been with her but were too afraid to call 911. Calling 911 is still a serious fear people have despite new Good Samaritan Legislation across Canada which, in theory, protects people from being criminalized when calling for assistance with an overdose. In reality, this legislation doesn't protect people from being brutalized by the police or alleviate people's fear of being arrested at the scene since many people are unaware of the new law. Some are saying that she never used "that shit"...but I know that she did. People are trying to make sense of it, find reasons... I'll let the candle burn for three days to help her make her way on her journey. I never really used to do this ritual until last year when one after another, after another, friend, coworker, or client died.

We're in the midst of Canada's worse overdose epidemic. More people have now died than at the height of the AIDS epidemic. A 327% increase of overdose deaths since 2008, though I think that increase has grown, since the data is out of date and incomplete and because it doesn't seem to be slowing down. In the last week three people I knew overdosed and died. Two people I knew through working in harm reduction and one who I knew because at one point I was his worker.

I lost so many people last year, not all from overdose. I also lost my dog of thirteen years and a relationship that was deeply meaningful to me. I felt like I was living in hell and then Raffi Balian died—my mentor, friend, comrade, confidant, and coworker. Raffi overdosed in a hotel room when he was out in Vancouver attending a meeting about supervised injection service. He had injected opiates for twenty years, fentanyl for the last ten. He died with fentanyl, morphine, and cocaine in his system. His death fucked me up. I was angry at him for using out there where people are dying so often, where they have analogues of fentanyl that we don't see here. I was angry at him for leaving us to continue on without him. I was angry at him because we had already been walloped so hard with despair after losing our co-worker, friend, and comrade Cameron, who took his life only months earlier.

I had never experienced this type of grief—the kind that throws you into deep despair, compounded grief that you can't process because it just keeps coming and coming and you just want to numb out. I literally felt like dying for a whole month, I was so overcome with emotional pain. I tried numbing out for a few years by ingesting benzos to help navigate through my work and life and to numb the stress and pain and grief but it lost its effectiveness when it started to make me feel extra anxious and not myself. I got off them last year and have been trying to cope and process in new ways. I actually stopped feeling like myself almost two years ago now. Like, how do you witness so much death and despair and loss and feel OK? You can't fucking feel OK. And it leaked out into my relationship, into my brain, into my body, into my friendships. But I never once said "fuck heroin" or "fuck drugs" and this is the reason why I am writing this. Because heroin and fentanyl aren't solely what is killing the people we love.

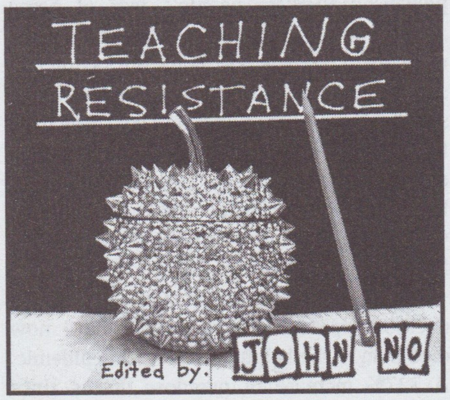
So many of us have lost so many people. So many punks have OD'd and died but each time people say "fuck heroin," "stop fucking using junk," etc. we shame and further stigmatize the people around us who are using it. When we do this, we place the blame in the wrong place. It's not just about the drugs. Our friends are dying for so many reasons. Prohibition is one of them—the main one. Living in this challenging world is another. Coping with trauma and pain. Getting fucked up on drugs is what a lot of us do to cope. There's a hierarchy in drug use that people find acceptable—alcohol, totally acceptable. Weed, cocaine, pills, party drugs, mushrooms, LSD are all generally OK. But people are next level mean about crack, meth, and junk. The stigma we throw onto others can have lasting, deep, effects. It can isolate people, make them hide their use, it has the opposite effect of good intention. Each time we rail against the drugs people are doing, even if we think it's in their best interest, we are also being classist, prejudiced, and further hurting the people we care about.

What's killing the people we love is living in this capitalist system that marginalizes people and creates grave inequity. We live in a system that treats many people as disposable and puts our lives in danger. It is challenging to get appropriate and timely mental health support or non-judgmental support for drug use that has become difficult in one's life. People are also dying primarily because of drug prohibition. The criminalization of using drugs means that supply of drugs has now become pretty unsafe—opiates like heroin are being cut with fentanyl or people are being sold straight up fentanyl. In Canada, there has been a ramping up of going after prescribing practices of doctors and, as a result, people are being cut off their meds, especially poor people and people who have a history of "addiction." There are lots of articles that detail the experiences of people going on oxys during the big push to prescribe them and then, when they were taken off the market, people were punished by immediately being forced off pain meds. At least with prescription drugs people generally know what they are getting. They can be safer than street drugs. This helped to fuel the overdose crisis we are in and so many of us warned policy makers and bureaucrats repeatedly that the outcomes of forcing people off pain meds without assistance or substitutions would be overdose deaths.

In many of our lifetimes, we have only ever known neoliberalism—austerity—cuts to housing, healthcare, education, and an increase in spending on war, incarceration, prison expansion. The drug war and neoliberalism both ramped up at the same time and it lines the pockets of the elites. It keeps judges', doctors', lawyers', law enforcement's, secret service's, bureaucrats', and corporations' pockets lined. The drug treatment industry is also a profitable business that is unregulated, not evidence based, and costs an incredible amount of money. Its profits extend into the billions every year. It's also hard to get into when you need it and it's hard to get access to when you need it for free.

The War on Drugs has been a war on people (poor people and racialized groups in particular) and in order for it to be fueled it created a huge propaganda machine. It purposefully distracts us by reinforcing this idea that our social threats and problems can all be blamed on the drugs. But drug policies were never about safety of people. They are rooted in racism. The Opium Act of 1908, which was Canada's first drug law, was created to go after Chinese workers. After the gold rush and the national railroad were built, there was high unemployment here. White workers were blaming Chinese workers for "taking their jobs." Huge race riots targeting Chinese business owners happened in Vancouver. To quell this unrest the government enacted the Opium Act to target the Chinese since many young, Chinese, men engaged in smoking opium in opium dens. This wasn't about the safety of people. It was a racist labor struggle that fueled Canada's first drug policies.

We need to keep the focus on the root causes of overdose deaths. The War on Drugs, austerity, high unemployment, poverty, lack of housing, colonization, racism, government's policies, capitalism, trauma, homophobia, transphobia, criminalization, climate change, and so on. These root causes are important; they impact our lives and they lead to the deaths of our friends and family. We can't let the system off the hook for contributing to the early mortality of people we love and we need to keep up the fight to live in a world free from oppression. It's simplistic to say "fuck drugs" and, though it might feel easier when all of this feels too large to address, it's actually harmful and we must not lose sight of what's really gone on and what actually needs to be fixed.



This month's column is by
John No, Teaching Resistance editor.

On April 15, 2017, a group of around 200 people consisting of antifa, black bloc, BAMN (By All Means Necessary), Bay Waters, and other assorted radicals came to Provo Park in Berkeley, California—right across the street from Berkeley High School, with its 4000+ students from all over Berkeley and Oakland. The radicals, who were also mostly from Oakland, Berkeley, and other surrounding towns in the Bay Area, showed up to confront a "Trump Rally" attended by 250+ people from all over the country, and organized by a constellation of neo-fascist groups (the so-called "alt-right"). These groups included Identity Evropa (white nationalists inspired by similar identitarian groups in Europe), the Oath Keepers (far right paramilitary / militia made up of Islamophobic veterans of the post-9/11 wars), DIY Division / Rise Above Movement (ultraviolent neonazis inspired by *Fight Club* who wear skull bandanas and work out way too much), 2 Million Bikers (notorious for the Altamont-style "security" they provided at the Trump inauguration in DC where they viciously attacked protesters), Proud Boys (*VICE* magazine founder Gavin McInnes' "Western Chauvinist" gang / club that includes an initiation rite in which they have to violently assault a member of antifa), 3%ers (aka III%ers, a libertarian / separatist, anti-immigrant militia group), and others.

United in their love for Trump, and emboldened by his particularly American brand of neo-fascism, the rally organizers and attendees had recently been given a big boost by their orange daddy himself after he tweeted out threats to cut Berkeley's public university funding (citing Berkeley's supposed disrespect for "Free Speech") in the wake of a decisive shutdown of far-right provocateur Milo Yiannopoulos. In that incident, a scheduled appearance by Yiannopoulos at UC Berkeley—during which he planned to publicly doxx dozens of transgender and undocumented students—was cut short by a massive grassroots protest by thousands of people using a multiplicity of tactics, including "peaceful" protest, civil disobedience, and direct action. Unfortunately, in part due to the aforementioned direct threats from the president of the United States and in part due to mainstream media manipulation of the optics surrounding direct action tactics ("burning garbage can porn"), typical liberal skittishness and radical-shaming kicked in, and after the Milo shutdown they stopped showing up to these ever-growing and increasingly-violent public displays by the far-right. The mass response to fascist provocation dissipated as liberals resorted to old tropes including "ignore them and they will go away" (obviously didn't work too well so far), "let's just have a civil conversation" (about whether genocide and slavery are OK?), and "antifascists and fascists are just extremists, all the same" (no comment necessary).

Partially as a result of this liberal retreat, things have gotten markedly worse on the ground for those who are left holding the bag that is confronting the growing wave of fascism. During subsequent neo-fascist rallies held in Berkeley (most notably on April 15), roughly similar numbers of fascist and antifascist protestors lost any semblance of conflict equilibrium due to direct neo-fascist collaboration with police. Antifa were disarmed by the police at the cordoned-off entrance to the park, while many neo-fascists were permitted to keep their weapons (particularly the paramilitary, combat-trained, veterans from Oath Keepers). Verbal goading resulted in multiple assaults, and witness accounts plus a wealth of publicly-available video footage show quite clearly that nearly all of these assaults were initiated by neo-fascist forces—particularly members of the DIY Division, 2 Million Bikers, Proud Boys, and Identity Evropa. However, there have been no charges filed against any neo-fascist participants, while anti-fascist radicals who were engaging in self-defense from fascist attacks have been charged with assault. In at least one instance, the police have used photoshopped "evidence" provided by anonymous 4chan message board trolls to arrest and charge a professor from a local community college.

In the end, this asymmetrical warfare (and make no mistake, this was a real fight) was so tilted towards neo-fascists and their state enablers in the police force that radicals had to make a full retreat from the park, following which neo-fascists poured into downtown Berkeley to terrorize people of color, queers, and women; shoot out windows with Black Lives Matter displays; and serve as a powerful message of hate to the liberals who were previously walking around eating ice cream and ignoring the open battle happening a scant few blocks away. During the entire protest, 4chan trolls and tech-savvy fascists were openly filming the entire rally, with a particular focus on capturing images of radicals whose faces were not covered—images they then put through facial recognition software and posted online along with what they could find out about the identities / addresses / etc. of the people they were doxxing.

Some of these doxxed images were of kids from Berkeley High, which is (as mentioned earlier) right across the street from Provo Park. Berkeley High is full of a vast diversity of teens who are furious about a bunch of white supremacist neo-fascists coming right to their neighborhood and screaming in their faces about how they plan to literally dehumanize and crush them under a Trumpist state-sanctioned bootheel. However, many of these students are inclined to not wear masks because they view this (rightfully) as *their* space, and are not always aware of the gravity and potential danger of the situation (for themselves and their families) when they are doxxed on the internet. When one of their teachers (who may or may not be someone very similar to myself) pops off their own mask for a second and tells them it might be a good idea to mask up for safety, we are definitely crossing into the kind of scenario that right-wing propagandists salivate over as they spin tales of radical leftist teachers indoctrinating kids. Naturally, of course, these kids need no indoctrination—they are generally more capable of seeing fascism for what it is than their typically-liberal parents are, and less-inclined towards false equivalencies such as "fascism and anti-fascism are exactly the same!"

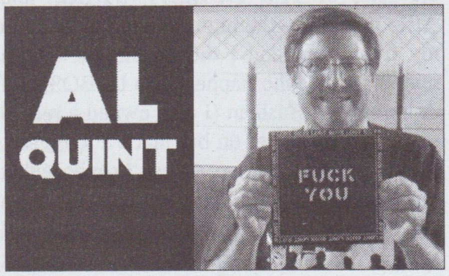
Still, situations such as this are just one aspect of a giant, thorny question as to how teachers— radical and otherwise—contend with the steadily increasing rise of neo-fascism and the far-right as manifested on the streets by paramilitaries and bolstered by the state (now more explicitly in the U.S. than ever before). This is not just an American problem, of course, as Europe, Asia, and the Middle East see some of their flawed, corrupt, democracies falter under manipulative, authoritarian, pressure from many of the same people who have been gaming those systems for individual advantage to begin with. In their book *Trouble on the Far Right: Contemporary Right-Wing Strategies and Practices in Europe*, Laura Laloire and Maik Fielitz define the Far Right as "...a political space whose actors base their ideology and action on the notion of inequality among human beings, combining the supremacy of a particular nation, 'race', or 'civilization' with ambitions for an authoritarian transformation of values and styles of government." How do teachers reconcile the need to provide a safe, open, space for *all*student inquiry, intellectual exploration / constructiveness, and critical assessment of information when such toxic and implicitly destructive political philosophy is ascendant?

Given that the current wave of far-right / neo-fascist sentiment has become part of the system or even taken overt power in many countries, including the United States, how do teachers (especially radicals/activists) contend with the conversations and power disparities that inevitably result in our classrooms, with parents, with administrators; and potential conflicts with internet trolls and / or even governmental authorities over content, outside class political activities, or other factors? How can we deal with the inevitable demands for a "conversation" giving equal time and a lack of "bias" when talking about neo-fascist ideologies that are rapidly becoming normalized, when one actor (student, parent, teacher, cop, whoever) openly advocates for things that would (and often already do) actively oppress other students in the same classroom, or maybe another classroom, or another school, or another city? How does a teacher in Iowa, in a class full of rural white kids, make it clear to a student that Richard Spencer (AKA the Nazi who got punched on the internet) isn't just offering "another opinion"when he publishes a piece advocating for "peaceful genocide" of Black Americans—particularly when that student doesn't have to look any Black students in the eye or answer their questions as she asserts this opinion, and when she can back up Spencer's purported validity by his repeated appearances on CNN / Fox / MSNBC / etc. (in the name of "balanced coverage")?

What happens in a class discussion at an adult school, when a Salvadoran refugee and self-declared Communist comes out as a Trump supporter because he sees Trump as the only person who can supposedly crush neoliberalism and the corrupt political class that pretty much everyone in the class agrees is a problem (though the rest of them hate Trump), and he cites the basis for his support as a bunch of sketchy YouTube channels that peddle conspiracy theories and white supremacist hate—the same channels and sources that Trump himself cites? What happens when a teacher gets fired for allowing a student to elaborate on a chain of thought they had where they were comparing Trump to Hitler in some respects, while another student fumes in the corner then quietly goes home to complain to his Trumpist parents, who then complain to the administration? The latter happened, by the way, not in Iowa or rural Ohio, but in Mountain View, California—the home of Google, AKA the ad and profit-driven replacement for defunded libraries worldwide.

As this column progresses on into its third year of publication, we find ourselves in an increasingly dark and dangerous world, where education will be redefined and weaponized in a million different ways that we can't even imagine as of yet. If you are a teacher, or otherwise deeply invested in education, please consider the questions I posed as just a few potential starting points for helping other teachers to understand the way *you* are dealing with these changing dynamics in the classroom and beyond—and once you've given them a good mulling over, write a column and send it in to teachingresistance@gmail.com! Keep up the good fight.

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers/educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary or secondary school ages (K-12), community colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com. There is also an archive for this column which can be found online at teachingresistancearchive.blogspot.com.



I'M FROM THE SUBURBS AND I LIKE PUNK

I'm typing this in July and, 35 years ago this month, way back in the summer of '82 (a nod to the great NOTA), the first issue of this esteemed zine was published. Technically, it was the second issue of *MRR*. Issue #0 was the insert for the *Not So Quiet On The Western*

Front double LP compilation that showcased 47 bands from Northern California and Nevada (more on that later). I first became aware of *MRR* when MDC came through Boston in August to play at Gallery East and had copies of issue #1 which, for some unknown reason, I neglected to pick up. I remember seeing another copy lying around on my friend Chris Corkum's bedroom floor and he offered to sell it to me later on but it was so beat to shit that I didn't bother. It remains the only issue of *MRR* I don't own, although I have a print-out. Incidentally, you can download a PDF file of #1 at this zine's website for the bargain-basement price of $1.49. That's only 49 cents more than the original cover price and, in 2017 dollars, it actually comes out to $1.04 less ($1 in 1982 is worth $2.53 now).

Enough economics. For my column in issue #402 (November 2016), I wrote about how 1981 was the year punk really broke, how it was the pivotal year for punk's development; but 1982 was also important, as hardcore punk in particular became even more of a worldwide phenomenon. It was an important year personally, as I graduated from college and started to immerse myself in the hardcore scene. It was the year I started my zine, *Suburban Punk*, which became *Suburban Voice* in mid-1984 after ten issues. I published 45 print issues, the last one in July 2003 and it's been an online blog since 2005. I really want to do a 35th anniversary print issue. As to whether or not that will happen is another story. And, yes, I want to do a book someday. Let me finish this column first.

So how did I get into my own writing thing, anyway? I'd published small newsletters when I was a kid and had done a little writing about music for my high school paper *The Blueprint* (Swampscott's sports teams are the Big Blue—no idea why), reviewing the likes of TED NUGENT, STARZ, and AEROSMITH—the high point (?) was when my friend Leo and I did an interview with my neighbor, who happened to be BOSTON drummer Sib Hashian (I also owned a record store with him later on but that's a long, sad, story I've told too many times). I suppose that was quite a coup for *The Blueprint*. He even played us a track from their as-yet-unreleased second album. Unfortunately for Leo, I got sole credit (unintentionally) even though he asked most of the questions.¶

I didn't do any writing while at Boston University but after graduating, I did record and live reviews for a local zine called *Concentration X* for one issue. I don't even remember if there was a second one but they butchered some of my reviews and I figured I'd try something on my own. I was feeling incredibly inspired by what was going on in the Boston hardcore scene at that time, both with the local bands and the out-of-town bands that were coming through and kicking my ass. I wanted to find a way to express my increasing enthusiasm. I'm sure a lot of people who started zines around then (and still do) felt that way. Boston already had some solid publications—*Boston Rock, Conflict,* and *Forced Exposure,* the latter of which was the first local zine dedicated completely to hardcore. Their first issue came out in late 1981. There was also *Take It,* which had a more eclectic bent and the legendary Byron Coley on staff. They included flexis and one featured DEAD KENNEDYS, FLIPPER, and ANGRY SAMOANS. *SMASH!,* published by high school student Jed Hresko, started around the same time as *Suburban Punk* (we were selling our first issues at the same show) and mixed the music coverage with a political bent.

My first issue came out in early September. Over the course of a few nights, I typed out four pages of live and record reviews. Some of the shows covered were the Process of Elimination tour (or, as I called it, Midwest Hardcore) with NECROS, NEGATIVE APPROACH, and MEATMEN, along with DYS and GANG GREEN. I panned the latter two, believe it or not…GANG GREEN had an off night and DYS were still pretty bad at that point. I wrote that NEGATIVE APPROACH stole the night and that Barry from the NECROS looked like Larry Mondello from the old *Leave It to Beaver* TV show (look it up). There were also reviews of KILLING JOKE, that MDC show (which also featured SS DECONTROL and DEEP WOUND's Boston debut) and the CLASH. I reviewed the PROLETARIAT's *Distortion* demo, the *New York Thrash* compilation tape and even NEGATIVE FX's *Feel Like A Man* radio tape, which wasn't commercially available. I left the top of page one blank while I thought up a name for the zine. That took some real brainstorming and I thought, "Well, I live in the suburbs (Swampscott, on Massachusetts' North Shore) and like punk" So I scrawled Suburban Punk across the top of that front page. OK, so it wasn't like there was any sort of eureka moment. I gave them to my dad, who had access to a xerox machine at the big defense contractor company he worked for (it's true—his work on the MX Missile's communication system got me through college) and he ran off 50 copies. I took them to a show and sold them for a quarter each. After I ran out of those, he did another 50 copies and it was the start of a publishing empire.¶

The writing was pretty rudimentary (to be generous) and the layout more than a bit primitive. The second issue was done on a ditto machine at the Hadley School in Swampscott, where my mom worked as a substitute. I'd imagine many of you don't know what one of those is but it was something that teachers would use to duplicate school materials—tests and the like—before copying machines became more commonplace. You'd make a master sheet and then literally crank 'em out. I did 90 copies of 10 one-sided pages, with Discharge on the cover. There wasn't an interview, it was just a photo of Cal I'd cut out of a UK punk mag and I reviewed the *State Violence State Control* 7". The problem with pages printed in that matter is the print eventually fades and it can become illegible. After that, I went to a print shop and produced it in a more or less professional" manner after that…well, I had someone xerox my zine for four issues a few years later, after hours at the government office he worked at, before permanently going to offset printing.

1982 was also a year for at least five life-changing compilations. I picked up three of them that spring. *Punk and Disorderly* was my introduction to the so-called UK82 bands (although all of them pre-dated 1982 and each had their own take on things)—VICE SQUAD, PARTISANS, ABRASIVE WHEELS, DISORDER, CHAOS UK, RED ALERT, and many more. A solid collection top to bottom, even including non-UK band DEAD KENNEDYS.

I'd already picked up SOA's 7" and got the MINOR THREAT, GOVERNMENT ISSUE, and YOUTH BRIGADE 7"s around the same time but Dischord's first 12" release, *Flex Your Head*, provided a quick and fast overview of the burgeoning DC hardcore scene, although many of the bands had split and new groups were already being formed. And for the loud / fast emphasis, there was diversity, from the tough Oi!-inspired sounds of IRON CROSS to ARTIFICIAL PEACE and RED-C's melodically-inclined compositions to the crazed, feedback-drenched, emanations of VOID.

Around the same time, Boston hardcore made its splash with *This Is Boston Not L.A.* from the Modern Method label. It was my first time hearing recordings by GANG GREEN, JERRY'S KIDS, GROINOIDS and DECADENCE (pre-DYS) and I'd only previously heard a song or two by FU'S, theFREEZE, and thePROLETARIAT. I couldn't believe how fast GANG GREEN played or how much the FU's had improved since adding a bass player and honing their musical skills a bit. Missing in action were SS DECONTROL since, as I wrote last year, Al Barile wanted to start his own label, X-Claim, and didn't want another one involved. NEGATIVE FX were also absent, as they were just getting started.

I mentioned the *Not So Quiet On The Western Front* compilation earlier. I'd taped a number of songs off the radio and finally took the plunge that fall. It was mind-blowing—so many good bands from one geographic area. Not everyone but many of them immediately connected, especially M.A.D., FANG, DOMINO THEORY, CAPITOL PUNISHMENT, BAD POSTURE, LOS OLVIDADOS, and CRUCIFIX, all of whom I was hearing for the first time. Even theWRECKS battering their way through "Punk Is An Attitude" had a winning grittiness. Another west coast compilation that caught my ear was BYO's *Someone Got Their Head Kicked In* and my tape of those songs logged a lot of time in the car deck—YOUTH BRIGADE's rousing violence, AGRESSION's intense skate punk, the NEW YORK DOLLS-inspired JONESES. And the booklet that provided an introduction to the Better Youth Organization, spreading an appealing youthful idealism.

MRR soon became a mandatory purchase every other month (and eventually every month). I'd read it cover to cover, checking out the ads and reviews and deciding what I'd order or try to trade a zine for. I can still remember the extremely enthusiastic review of the first DIE KREUZEN album…““this is fucking great!” repeated *ad infinitum.* I started to do mail interviews with different bands—NEGATIVE APPROACH and FANG were the first two. The high point of each day would be coming home from my shitty bank job to see what treasures awaited by the mailboxes. All of this made me feel like I was part of something special.

My first contribution to *MRR* was a short piece about SIEGE in issue #15 (July 1984) and, by then, I could string together a few sentences in a more-coherent fashion. I soon started doing scene reports and contributing the odd interview / article from time to time right up until starting my column in 2005. I made my first trip to the Bay Area in March 1985 and met the *MRR* crew for the first time. I stayed overnight and the other houseguests were future *MRR* mainstay Martin Sprouse and the one and only Pushead. Tim and the gang (as they're introduced on the radio show) always treated me well and were supportive of my various projects.

I've been looking through some of the '80s-era issues and what immediately sticks out (besides how awful yellowed newsprint smells) is how long and intense the letters section was, as well as scene reports from all over the world. I miss both of those a great deal. Those back and forth beefs from one issue to the next were entertaining.

I wonder what Tim would make of the way information is disseminated these days, the instant access and availability of just about any band past or present on Bandcamp, YouTube, various music blogs, or file-sharing and torrent services. I wonder how he'd feel about *MRR* now offering PDF subscriptions and downloads of previous issues. I even wonder what he'd think about the zine having a bar code, as well as having a table of contents and page numbers, something that's only a recent occurrence. At the time of his passing in 1998, music downloading was just starting to catch on. Social media was still a few years away from its breakthrough. Now, if I read about a record that intrigues me in one of the columns or record review section, it literally takes seconds to check it out. And if I like it, I'll hit up one of the online distros I use or order directly from the label. YOU KIDS DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD YOU HAVE IT! WE HAD TO WORK TO FIND OUR MUSIC, WALKING MILES TO THE POST OFFICE IN TWO FUCKING FEET OF SNOW… GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE…

Actually, I know how good I have it, even as I'm wistful for the old days. And I miss Tim, especially that seal-like laugh. Viva *MRR* and here's to another 35 years!

imogen binnie says:
be the garbage you want to see in the river

I'm freaking out, *Maximum*. I've been freaking out for like a month. I've been trying to write a column about morality and how it probably doesn't need to be as much of a bad word as I've believed it to be since I was a kid but I can't even get my shit together to start writing it because every time I look at my keyboard I get so overwhelmed with all the ugly terrible shit in the world that I just go smoke weed and eat an Ativan. While this may not always have been obvious in these columns—I've turned in more than my share of clunkers, including probably the future non-classic you're reading right now—I usually try to at least sort of have something to say. But I can't even bring myself to say something concrete because all I fucking know how to do right now is to freak out about death.

I think this is the furthest past the deadline that my column has been since I started writing 'em a few years ago, so I'm scratching this out on my lunch break at work. Usually I work through lunch, because I'm a social worker and the expectation placed on people whose jobs do "good," are based at least in part on emotional labor, and / or are coded female is that we don't mind pushing our workload capacity because we aren't doing this job for the money. But this shit is never getting turned in if I don't write it on this lunch break.

I have *so much shit* to do.

I have work work and then this column is work and then I also have books to be working on and music to be writing and time to be finding to have band practices for bands that haven't practiced in actual years. And I have this new kid and honestly all I want to do is hang out with him; I appreciate that I get to have a job where I (theoretically) help people but, sorry, if I didn't need money I'd just stay home and hang out with my kid. But...but...even when I'm with my kid I'm hella preoccupied because have you seen this shit about climate change? About how we're all going to fucking die? I can't stop thinking about it. Alex got me that Rebecca Solnit book, *Hope In The Dark*, and it's helpful when it's open in front of me but then I put it down and Donald Trump is still president.

I feel like Social Justice Warrior Discourse has kind of chilled out in the last few months, or at least been bumped off my feed (whatever) in favor of constant "look at these fucking buffoons in power." Which is weird, right? Because social justice warrior bullshit is probably more relevant now than it ever has been. This shit? The thing where the president does whatever dumb asshole bullshit he wants, and the Republicans are the ones in power but they literally don't give a fuck about anything except tax cuts and (relatedly) white supremacy so they just let him? Which is going to lead to all of us literally dying when the earth dies? THIS IS WHAT WE'VE BEEN TALKING ABOUT. It's not a coincidence that Donald Trump, the guy who is getting away with some of the most fucked up shit we have ever seen in American politics (which is itself pretty impressive), is basically the most privileged motherfucker we could imagine. It is absolutely unsurprising that the richest, most toxically masculine, whitest, most grossly heterosexual (in the "locker room talk" sense as well as all the other ways that heterosexuality is gross), patriarch can literally offer Vladimir Putin access to the American power grid and barely raise a fucking eyebrow in the House or Senate. It's not a coincidence that, despite his being one of the stupidest, most self-centered, man-children in a culture of idiot man-babies, whiteness, maleness, and an incredible degree of class privilege intersect to produce the type of royal monster who literally never has to be accountable to *anyone* for his actions.

Somehow I feel like even "fuck the G20," as a sentiment, has taken a backseat to "how the fuck is the United States the only country in the G20 that is refusing to get on board for addressing climate change?" This is literally a crisis in which *everyone is going to die* and there's nothing we can do about it because that's how committed we as a culture are to white supremacy, patriarchy and capitalism.

I freak out when I think about the earth becoming uninhabitable in my own lifetime. It's like an adult version of the kind of freakout I used to have when I was a kid and it was getting toward the end of summer and the afternoon sunlight felt all melancholy or full of that desolate childhood sense of death, my child's body overwhelmed with hopelessness in the way that only a kid's body can be overwhelmed with emotion.

Kids feel things so deeply.

It's sad and it's disorienting but I go on with my day and then, on some level, I feel like that bewildered and melancholy kid but I'm up and moving so that feeling fades because I have shit to do and then, when I'm finally able to take some time to sit and process, there it is, waiting patiently: the disorientation that comes from the fact that these motherfuckers are actively working, in every way they can, to kill us. And the law is structured so it's illegal for us to kill them first.

Also, I have a kid now.

When I think about the world becoming uninhabitable because of callous shitfuck politicians who have never had to reckon with real stakes for any decision they have ever made in their lives—when shit collapses they and their kids are going to live on luxury yachts or possibly spaceships and be fine—it's one thing to feel that desperation in my nervous system but fully another to think about what this will do to my kid. It pushes me over the fucking edge. That abstract melancholy I've felt on and off my whole life, which comes into focus when I think about the planet dying while I'm still here, it turns into something sharper. Hotter. Less tolerable—although it sure doesn't make me feel any more powerful. Becoming a parent has made me hate white supremacist capitalist patriarchy with a depth that I could not even have glimpsed before I had a kid. You know? Fuck with me, that's fine. But this kid is gonna be on this planet for longer than me and I want to make a joke here about him at least getting to have some sick-ass *Fury Road* car jumps and shit but that type of dystopia is the type of world where physical strength, ruthlessness, and cruelty give one the upper hand. In other words, it's a puffed up version of a normal hegemonic patriarchal fantasy, which is exactly the type of thing that this DIY punk shit has been about resisting since forever, or at least since somebody in Europe was like "pip pip fuckin cheerio other cultures aren't real let's push them off their land and / or kill them and then take their stuff."

I think one of the most important things that we've been able to come up with, as humans, is the stuff that is in opposition to that Might Makes Right mindset: giving a fuck about each other. Resisting toxic garbage hate culture. Trying to be better than the shit we see around us.

It sounds kinda hippie but punks is hippies and also, look what radical anti-hippie straight world baby boomer death culture has given us. I'd rather be a hippie.

It's summer. I already smell bad.

Mad Max movies rule but I don't want my kid to have to live in one. I want him to be okay. I want him to be able to make his own decisions. To understand that authoritarian tough guy bullshit is not only bad for everyone, including the tough guy, but also literally unsustainable. That connecting with people and meeting them where they're at and building with them—growing wildly and unpredictably instead of holding sadly onto a desperate and impossible conservative stagnation slash death—makes for better lives and a better world. I mean, do you think Donald Trump is happy? Dude looks fucking miserable.

I keep thinking that the best thing he could do—the thing that might make him stop hating himself, stop hating being president, stop goading jerks to yell at strangers on twitter on his behalf for a fleeting half second of internet validation—is a heel-face turn. I mean, it's the only way any of this could be resolved; otherwise he's just gonna keep digging indefinitely. But imagine Donald Trump as a good guy who gives a fuck what his constituents think! Who wants them to remain alive. A little humility would go a long way to alleviating all the insecurity that he's constantly overcompensating for, and he'd even get the good press he's so desperate for.

But I'm pretty sure we're all gonna die first.

ENDNOTES:

1) You can have all the good stuff from *Mad Max* without all the patriarchy stuff. Borrow a motorcycle, spike up your hair, put on some shoulder pads, and do some jumps over some trucks.

2) This is gonna sound disclaimer-y, but don't kill anybody. Also probably don't fuck with benzos.

3) Don't come at me about heterosexuality stuff. I've done a bunch of different heterosexuality stuff. It was gross.

4) It's worth noting that a whole lot of people in this country have been living with the reality that the police or something like similar to the police (such as racist white people without badges) can kill their children and other family members, literally without consequence, for as long as this country has been a thing. While I'm over here having my middle class white lady freakout, I'll leave it to you to figure out who those people are.

Totally
Lame
with Neve Be

Disability Justice Principle Number Three: Anti-Capitalist Politic

> *"We are anti-capitalist as the very nature of our mind/bodies resists conforming to a capitalist 'normative' productive standard, with the actual construction of 'disability' derived from the exploitation of the body in an economy that sees land and human as components of profit, deriding the integrity of our very real crip labor."*
> *— Patricia Berne*

On Dyke Day, a day on which lesbians should be murdering cops while sipping cocktails (not a fan of dry insurrection over here) in the sunshine, our house, The Dam(ned), was broken into, in the sunshine. My roommate (and thrupple mate) was at the beach, and coming home to get it on with their date, and my partner and I had been at the mall, whining our way through gay wedding appropriate outfit assemblages. We arrive at our busted open house within minutes of each other. Tony and I arethere long enough before Kate to realize that all doors, including the garage, were wide open, especially the kitchen and back door, which was in pieces in hell. We can't find the cat.

The cat is named Mister Mu, he is an imminent celebrity, due to his striking looks and unusual personality, and he is missing. I am hyperventilating. I sometimes hyperventilate in the way where I could probably slow it down if I concentrated, but this was not one of those times. I'm sort of hoarsely crying and yelling. I know my computer and couple hundred dollars and stuff are gone, yeah, yeah, what feels real right now, though, is the fucking cat. It's already been a week to recover from. Police murdered Charleena Lyles. A drunk white tech bro attacked our friend Dorian Taylor on Capitol Hill and they've been in and out of the hospital. We don't need this now.

When I see Kate climb up the steps fifteen minutes after we get home all I can say is, "I can't find Mu," and all they can say is, "I can't talk about Mu right now." But we comb the perimeter of the house and yard, and Kate ventures into the formidably messy garage and out that darned cat pops, right into their arms. I don't see it happen but while my back is turned I hear, "MU!" the way you say it not when you are shaking your fist at Unfeeling Clouds or God but when your beloved is staring you right in the fucking face, as if they had never really gone missing. My heart climbs down from its perch, and slowly I become lucid enough to notice things like my phone, which I use to call Lexy to see if she'll bring me cigarettes, something I always seem to need when shit gets real bad no matter how long it's been since I've quit. Then I notice room, and with the phone on Facetime I tour other people, my friends, through the throbbing rooms of my invaded house, so that I don't have to show myself them alone.

Something I think is funny is that the back screen door was cut with a grilling spatula that they found on our deck. Which means that while they had a plan to the extent that they knew we weren't home, they didn't have a tool to break in with. And the only alcohol they stole was disgusting flavored shit we couldn't get rid of or drink. When we talked to one of our neighbors he laughed with us about it saying, "Teenagers…Ohhh, you got a girlfriend, huh?" We didn't want to call the cops but we had to for Tony's homeowner's insurance (gross rule) to even potentially cover anything we lost. As it turns out, insurance won't pay for anything in shared space or anything that wasn't Tony's, basically. We worked around it, but it's still not enough to replace me and Kate's shit, and Kate's room really got hit the hardest. Tony and Kate told me it was okay for me to not be there when the cops came, and while I feellike I should take one for the team, I was grateful. Lexy and I awkwardly and moodily gofor a cigarette and a walk at the exact moment the pigs pull up.

I'm writing off a loaned PC in a place called Union Bar, that I wanted to believe had a long radical history because of its wall art, but really was established in 2013. But whatever, it's owned by teachers and I guess it's never too late to be radical. Chunks of radical things I was working on are gone. But my brain isn't. And there's time. Kinda. I think as a disabled crust punk of color I am very used to things being stolen or lost or broken or just needing to leave things behind or never ever having them to begin with. Me and things have a strange history.

I have never loved computers. I prefer books. And in person interactions, dancing, singing, and long handwriting, and even word processors for gods' sake, but accessibility and survival in a capitalist world demands I use computers. And when it comes down to it, the ways the lines are drawn are: make money, be given money, or perish. For disabled people, sometimes we perish anyway. Computers are the best way that I've found to attempt to have an income, especially when I don't know the accessibility of a city I am in very well, or I can't leave my house, let alone get inside where I'm going. Trial and error is a necessary evil, but it can still just mostly suck for disabled people, especially when you only have so many spoons to waste on trying things out. Or knives. I would like some knives.

A week after the break-in, I finished reading Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*. Before reading this book, I think that I was still probably struggling with that age old anarchist adage, "property is theft." Perhaps you've heard it. Not anymore, son. Fuck that. For legit poor people, or for people who have been poor most of their lives and then worked to get something they need or want or love or are proud of, to lose that is fucking brutal. I've said this before, but it has taken me so long, and it has taken so many times of learning this for it to really sink in, so many punks and queers I've loved and organized community with have come from families with money. So yeah, for them, for rich anarchists, it's petty to care if someone robs you; it's stupid to settle down. You should just pop from city to city like a light. You should just buy some land but never spend time there, save it for the revolution. You should just dumpster dive. You should never have a job and—god forbid— a career. If you would fault someone who would steal from you when they need it more than you do, you're fucked up.

I needed my computer to make money. I don't have the money to replace it. Clearly the individuals who broke into my house who favored apple brandy and cupcake vodka also needed my computer to make money. I don't think it's their fault that they need money and don't have it, but I do think it's fucked up to break into somebody's space, whether their space is a house or a hole in the ground.

Like Lauren Olamina (as Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, my dear, has asserted many times), I am a disabled, deep feeling, femme tomboy of color. Like Lauren Olamina, I am a badass moralist. I believe there will be no real justification for the damage any war, including social and class and race war will do. But I still want revolution. I still want somehow for marginalized people to get what they need. Like Lauren Olamina, I intend to survive. When you steal from me it hurts me. When you attack me it hurts me. No matter where you are coming from, I am coming from a place too. A place that matters. My fields are not overflowing. My resolve is not ever replenishing. But I am resilient. And yes, I will probably be anti-capitalist forever, because of course. Because I hate that not being able to work in a straightforward, able bodied supremacist and white supremacist context causes me to have an identity crisis and nervous breakdown every six months. Because what the fuck question am I asking right now is, do you have a job for me? That is not completely demoralizing and that is actually accessible to a person who is multiply disabled? 'Cause I am broke, man.

Haha. I thought not. But I still love my life.

ENDNOTES:

1) Accessibility Shout-Out: Hey, "Work"! Fuck you.

2) If you live in Seattle, vote for Nikkita Oliver for Mayor. If you don't live in Seattle, promote her campaign. (hopefully she's made it through the primaries by the publishing of this).

3) If you want to share resources, ask for advice, or just dish about being disabled punks, email me at foxlovesriver@gmail.com or write to me at 3805 South Orcas Street, Seattle, WA 98118. All hate mail will be burned in a full moon ritual.

ANDREW
UNDERWOOD

Hello all you no fuckers, noize freaks, crusties, and shut-ins! I hope you all enjoyed the Pinoy punk issue as much as I did, it was the best issue in a long time (made better by the fact that I didn't have a column in it, haha). Great interviews, massive scene reports, and, most importantly, the spotlight shined on a scene that is terminally under-appreciated internationally. Here's hoping that due to that issue connections are made, tours are booked, and distribution arrangements are made so that the rest of the world has better access to the amazing punk that has come from and is now emerging from the Philippines.

On a related note, I had the pleasure of catching local Pinoy hardcore band ANINOKO at the SUBVERSIVE RITE / UNARM tour stop and they were fucking amazing. Absolutely the closest any band has come to capturing the vibe of LOS CRUDOS live in the '90s, with a charismatic frontman delivering strong and well-articulated politics alongside blazing thrash tunes that had the crowd raging.

So, it's no secret that reformed bands don't have the best track record when it comes to producing new material. The live nostalgia sets might be good, but it is unfortunately very, very, rare for a band to recapture lightning in a bottle if and when they elect to hit the studio again. Fortunately for crust lovers worldwide, ΧΑΟΤΙΚΌ ΤΕΛΟΣ (CHAOTIC END) have released a new LP in 2017 (*Υπόσχεση*) that picks up right where their 1993 classic *Μπροστά Στην Παράνοια* left off. This is bleak, desperate, crust, almost too huge-sounding to have been produced by the three-piece, with expansive riffs, killer guttural vocal trade-offs, and tasteful use of their trademark synths. No trends or nods to modern sounds here, this is 100% classic Greek crust, built around the those incredibly harsh vocals, riffs that give more attention to the space between the notes than being as busy as possible, and punk-as-fuck drumming that betrays no metal influence whatsoever. As with their earlier releases, the lyrics are a definite highlight, referencing contemporary political and personal issues with a bleak, poetic, sensibility that lines up with the passionate vocal deliveries. Fans of the true stench and crust classics à la early DEVIATED INSTINCT, HELLBASTARD and, let's just say it, classic-era CHAOTIC END just found their LP of the year. There's not a touch of filler to be found on this LP. All eight songs are incredibly effective and intense, from the delicate intros to the ambient outro to the driving metallic parts to the crushing mid-tempo grooves. To top it all off the graphic design is excellent throughout, from the cover and insert to the included poster. The LP looks and feels absolutely timeless, like it could have been released just a year or two after their landmark first LP. This is a brilliant, best of the year, return from a band that few could have predicted would have reformed at all. To top it all off, it's self-released, proving that even 20-plus years later CHAOTIC END are true DIY lifers.

As long as we're talking classic crust, let's take a pit stop in Philadelphia to visit with MORTAL WAR, whose *Gates of Hell* demo is an absolute fucking ripper! This takes me back to the first time I saw STORMCROW (opening for DISCLOSE at Burnt Ramen in October 2004 during the visit that convinced me to move out to San Francisco, for the record). Blow-away mastery of the style, with vocals like a war cry from hell, massive riffs, stomping punk-based drumming and tasteful keys appearing in the more mellow moments. Like STORMCROW (or early HELLSHOCK, or the best of EFFIGY) this is a dynamic take on stench-core, streamlined and distilled to the driving essence of the style. There are a few moments, like the freak-out spoken word of "Final War" that recall the more patience-requiring moments of the early peace punk influenced crust, but most of this is all-go, get down to business, driving crust of the highest order, capped off with a masterful AMEBIX cover ("Winter") that they wear like a fuckin' glove. "Demo" or no, this is not a band in the nascent stages of finding their sound.This is a fully-developed recording from a band that are top-notch at what they do. Everything here coalesces beautifully, from the songwriting and performances to the high-quality recording to the graphic design. Hats off to MORTAL WAR! They're a monster of a band and I can't wait to hear more.

Now comes a long stretch of new releases from SPHC, starting with the slightly improbable but fantastic pairing of SLUDGE and THISCLOSE on a split EP. I've been cheerleading for small-town Japanese hardcore traditionalists SLUDGE since their debut LP on Crust War back in 2014, most recently covering their late 2015 demo CD. That demo material was a clear indicator of the direction they're going on this new release, heavy metallic hardcore with one foot in the traditionalist camp (think OUTO or even ZOUO) and the other in the NYHC-leaning sounds of later AGGRESSIVE DOGS or even SAND, all overlaid with crazy over-the-top metal solos and rolled-r gangster vocals that sound like the singer is gonna climb through your speakers to punch your fucking face up. The recently prolific THISCLOSE follow with another two tracks of top-shelf mid-to-late period DISCHARGE worship, also overlaid with blazing solos though these are much more restrained than SLUDGE's noodly metal workouts. The material on their new *What Glory?* EP is a bit better than the first cut they offer up on the split, but the stop-start attack of "The Mournful Sound" would fit right in alongside the track from that EP, which is their finest work to date. Catchy, note-perfect DISCHARGE style without any blatant riff theft or other lazy songwriting shortcuts. As always, Rodney Shades' falsetto vocals may be an issue, but if they are that's your problem, not theirs.

Mr. Shades recently released the first issue of his new zine, *Our Future*, and it is an absolute revelation. As befitting an individual who works so tirelessly (obsessively?) to recreate a specific musical style for the enjoyment of the masses, this first issue of *Our Future* is basically a long-form article about one of the strangest footnotes in the history of Brit-core, namely the collaboration between house titans K.L.F. and crust pioneers E.N.T. on the track "3AM Eternal" and the aborted *Black Room* album. The most public face of this collaboration was their joint performance at the 1992 Brit Awards, where a grinding decidedly non-dance performance of the aforementioned track by the core of EXTREME NOISE TERROR on national television was topped off by the members of K.L.F. firing prop machine guns into the crowd (the video is readily available on the internet, and it's glorious). Between a thoroughly researched introduction and a long interview with Mark Bailey (then bass player of E.N.T., now maestro of noizy lunatics the WANKYS), Shades pieces together the complete story of this unlikely collaboration, from its inception to its aftermath. A clever afterword reviews a couple of other contemporary metal-meets-dance releases and then crowns EXITHIPPIES (specifically the *Tokyo Sound System Vol. 5* CD) as the true inheritors of the *Black Room* legacy. This is as good a zine as you can find in 2017, incredibly well-written with a classic layout that's clean without being too digital and tons of interesting graphics. Some credit should go to Bailey for his entertaining and extremely forthright, if not blunt, responses, but the majority goes to Shades for putting together a fascinating and engaging zine on such a drilled-down and specific topic. It's apparently supposed to be biannual, and I'd be happy to lay out for a ten year subscription right now.

An amazing get for SPHC is the new ILLYA EP. Like SLUDGE, I've been following this band for a very long time. One of my very first columns for this here magazine featured a gushing review of their *Destruction Impulse* cassette EP, and I've been a rabid follower ever since. This new record, titled *In Adversity...* is just as rock-solid as their earlier material. First of all, it looks fantastic, with a heavy-duty tip-on sleeve and sleek art courtesy of Zuuk Ozaki. No disrespect to legends like Sugi, but it's really nice to see a Japanese band going for a less-established punk artist for a full layout like this. The music is absolutely fucking amazing, melodic and driving, heady and heavy, a perfect symphony of soaring guitar leads and motor-mouthed vocals with a note-perfect rhythm section driving it all. ILLYA are the ideal mix of later POISON ARTS and PAINTBOX, with the formers' straightforward melodic sensibility and the latter's ability to touch and hold the spirit and create truly epic moments in a hardcore punk songwriting context. "The Polar Star" is ILLYA's magnum opus to date, but to ignore the A-side tracks would be like only listening to "Iron Ore" off of *Trip, Trance & Travelling* while ignoring all the other songs on that monument of a record. "Day Dreaming" and "Seed of Possibility" are incredibly special songs in their own right. "Seed of Possibility" in particular is a massive dark stormcloud of a song, all huge riffs and frantic vocals with impeccable bridges and nary a note out of place. This is a fuckin' amazing record, easily defined as an instant classic and a must have for anyone who even dabbles in Japanese hardcore or really for anyone who has an interest in what hardcore should sound like in 2017.

As if it weren't enough for SPHC to have unleashed the previous two killer EPs on us in the last month or so, they've also graced us with EXITHIPPIES' *Dance Maniac*, a 12" EP in a proper cutout DJ sleeve ready for your next crust rave. I'll admit upfront that my knowledge of electronic music has been formed mostly by its existence along the periphery of drugs I liked to do when I was younger and the New Smell scene driven by EXITHIPPIES' Jo2 (CHAPMANS et. al.) but goddamnit I know what I like and this is pretty fucking great. This record drifts between danceable big beat / house ("Sun Rain"), heavily distorted and manipulated crust ("Dead Start"), minimalist early Wax Trax-style industrial dance (Fluffy Cloud 3," "Home Made House Pie") and pot-drenched IDM chillout ("Funk Love Dub Bug"). To be honest, this is both barely a punk record and one of the most punk records I've ever covered in my column. The wild range of material that EXITHIPPIES have produced in their fifteen-plus year career is nothing short of remarkable. The waves that they spread around the pond of Japanese hardcore / crust fans when they first started dabbling in this style with *Hard Funk* (and the B-side added on to the DEATH DUST EXTRACTOR demo 12") resonated for ages, and I am so glad that they've finally produced an even more all-in follow-up. The recent split with FILTHY HATE was an excellent preview, but this is EXITHIPPIES in all of their fractured electronic glory, with hardly a guitar to be found. Fair play, this is not for your average punk. It's weird, it belongs in strange clubs that exist underneath street level and salons for the heads and those with a head-full. That being said, if you've got the gumption and / or the stash to follow, it's a fucking great record and please rest assured, punk as fucking fuck.

Y'all know me though, I'm not going to go out on you trying to sell a fuckin' crazy noize dance record as the final record of the month. C'mon now, that's a bit much. Let's leave this column on a solid palate cleanser courtesy of Barcelona's LUX. Their *Demo '16* (released on Discos Enfermos in 2017, gimme a break, I'm not that late to the game) sees these veterans of bands like FRACASO, SHITTY LIMITS, and SECT pumping out six tracks of killer punky hardcore that's equal parts UK82 and later anarcho-punk, with bright and clear female vocals that are equal parts ACTION PACT and SAD BOYS. While the MORTAL WAR demo showcases a band that knows what their sound is and hews to that sound throughout, this is more of a proper demo, with the band dipping into both straightforward punk screamers ("Battled") and more "mature" post-punk sounds ("Dominated") with equally fruitful results. The opening track, "In Distress" previews both sounds, joining a deliberate pace and tuneful chorus to a frantic punk verse. Later on, the slower, bass-dominated, tracks build to effectively chaotic climaxes, while the punkier tracks would fit right in on a *Punk and Disorderly* compilation. Yeah, this is fuckin' great and should be relatively easy to find yet.

Quick shout out before I go: I just went to the East Coast for the first time in like thirteen or fourteen years and while a lot of it was amazing but uninteresting to y'all, I did get a chance to visit Philly's Sit and Spin record shop, which was by far the best record store I've ever encountered on the East Coast and is in the running for the best in the US entirely. Small, packed with fucking hits, well-priced, and punk as fuck. Philadelphia is one of the few big cities left in the US where it's economically feasible to operate a store that's so purely punk and I hope like hell that they stay open for decades to come, and that the punx in Philly recognize what an awesome resource they have in that store. Sadly I didn't have a spare $2,500 to buy the copy of SO WHAT's *Blood Wash The Dead City* they had on the wall (!), but I was able to pick up a bunch of sick records for very fair prices. Please visit their place when you happen to be in town—you won't be disappointed. Until next time, send beer!

EUROPE: A BEGINNER'S GUIDE

BY METTE HELMS

An Ode to Tapes

My dad recently gave me a bunch of his old mixtapes. Between the nicely homemade bootlegs, I found a tape labelled "Mette 1993." I remember recording this one night before bedtime, and the picture proof of the session shows a 3-year-old me in mint green PJs ('90s yeah!) with a set of huge headphones on my head and a microphone in my hands. The tape is complete nonsense and I don't understand a word of what I'm singing in my pre-years-of-speech-therapy language.

At that age, I already knew how to play tapes on the family stereo. Press the triangle to play, press the square to stop, press the double arrows aggressively to rewind or skip the boring parts. Easy!

When I got myown Fisher-Price tape player at age four, I got to learn the magic of the round record button. From then on, my entire childhood consisted of home-taped bootlegs and radio recordings. Remember the pain of a radio DJ speaking over your favorite song that you were trying to record for your mixtape? Or the joy of bringing home a bag of tapes and CDs from the library, knowing that soon you'd have your own tape copy through a little music piracy? Everyone did it back then, everyone talked about it and no one considered it illegal. The legal question of copying and sharing music you didn't write came with the faster internet connections, and even my dad, the bootleg tape pioneer, warned me about downloading files when I started navigating the internet on my own in my pre-teen years.

When I got into punk, the tapes followed of course. I had already owned an iPod by then and was mastering the art of music downloads. The iPod was dead after eighteen months so soon I was back to carrying my blue Sony Walkman everywhere (that unfortunately played its last tape this spring after twenty years of loyal service). So, the natural thing to do was to put my downloaded music files on mix tapes. That was the easiest way to have music on the go, in an age where portable speakers were expensive battery drainers and even the fanciest cellphones had storage space for about fifteen songs. I spent my teenage years on squares and in parks with a ghetto blaster and a stack of tapes. I know I've talked about this in a column before, but discovering DIY punk was a huge life changer for me. I got a lot of my musical and political schooling through downloading a torrent named "'80s European punk and hardcore" and later "female-fronted punk" (yes, that term sucks but I'll save that for another column…), and making mixtapes of the tracks from the files that took about six days to download each.

Soon, I learned the wonders of the distros that would set up their stuff at shows and fests. They had *real* tapes, with nice covers, booklets and basically everything that a homemade tape lacks. All for 20–30 kroner ($3.00–$4.50). In my teenage years, my record collection consisted of few carefully picked items by my favorite bands and a bunch of hand-me-downs from a housemate. Financially, I couldn't go to a show and come back home with a few records, but buying tapes was an affordable way to consume music. My tape collection from 2008–2010 shows how my young adolescence taste was craving raw hardcore and crust bands and a selection of the collection includes bootlegs and original tape albums by AGHAST, DSB, KONTATTO, MARTYRDÖD, TRAGEDY, and WARCOLLAPSE. Any music collection is a timeline of perhaps not just an individual's life, but of an entire scene's preferred style.

I rarely see tape albums in Copenhagen these days, but there's definitely not a universal absence of the tape album format. When I visited South East Asia last summer, tape albums took up a huge part of the record stores, and distros barely carried any vinyl. At a price around 20myr ($5) in Malaysia, the bootlegged or semi-band approved tapes are a main way to own music as an alternative to the heavily taxed imported vinyl. Quality-wise, these tapes look more like the "special edition" tapes I see in Europe with hand-folded paper covers and nicely printed inlays and labels. On the flight home, my luggage contained bootlegged tapes of bands I already knew from home (MASSHYSTERI, NAPALM, TØRSÖ, ZEX) and local gems like HURT and LUBRICANT. I love that these high-quality tapes are not seen as exclusives, limited editions or the like, but as a normal way to listen to music.

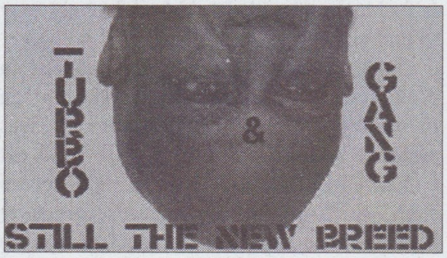
In the Copenhagen scene, tapes are mainly used for demos and thereby mostly have the aesthetics of a demo. Don't get me wrong, I love the simple ultra-DIY homemade tapes. It's an easily accessible way for everyone to put out physical formats of their music, which is basically the essence of punk music culture. Distributing your band's tape can be done without label support without ruining your personal economy (Though I have noticed that more and more demos are being released and re-released on tape on labels, which is cool too).

It's impossible to live in Copenhagen and write a column about tapes without mentioning the KBH festival compilation. KBH is short for København / Copenhagen—it's a fest for local punk / hardcore bands in the DIY scene and has been a tradition since 2002. Each tape contains one or two songs from every band that performed that year's festival, and gives a good selection of what bands were active a certain year. That way, the Copenhagen punk scene can be traced year by year with these tapes. Tapes will feature anything from a popular band that's been playing for years to a band that had their first show at the festival. Pretty damn awesome! The fest didn't happen in 2017 but it seems to keep popping up again and again after a period of silence, so my fingers are crossed that this tradition will continue and the future will bring more compilation tapes from the Copenhagen punx.

Writing about tapes is distracting as I end up digging into my tape collection, playing tapes and looking at the booklets instead of doing the actual column writing. I'm overdue with this column because of that, so I might as well just hand it in, and get around to some focused guilt-free tape listening instead. I can't wait!

ENDNOTES:

While CDs might seem to have the same qualities of accessibilities and affordability that tapes have, let me state a fact: CDs are just not fucking punk. I don't know what punk is, but CDs are definitely not that.



"The American flag! Patriotic glory!
Skins forever! Forever free!"
—Red, White & Blue, "The American Flag"

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"No one's gonna tell you when you're doing right
They tell you when you're doing wrong.
As long as they keep themselves shut up
We'll just keep carrying on, Oi!"
—Anti-Heros, "You Can't Kill the Blues with a Gun"

NEVER SURRENDER THE PRIDE

As of this writing, Independence Day is right around the corner and I'm psyched cuz, as is the case for any self-respecting American skinhead, it's my favorite of all the federal holidays. We got a wicked patriotic playlist of all-American Oi! planned that should annoy the neighbors for about 12 hours, enough hot dogs and Yuengling (and Diet Coke) for 50 Bruno Sammartinos, and, if the rain washes out the fireworks, we're gonna have a triple feature of *Red Dawn, Invasion U.S.A.,* and Mel Gibson's *The Patriot*. Commies and King George, step aside! And if I receive any more Facefuck invites about 4th of July BBQs that are dripping with irony and cynicism I'm gonna snap: "Come 'celebrate' 'Murica's 'independence.' Wear red, white, and blue lol." Jags. Fourth of July BBQs are for the patriotic—and their dogs—only. (28th amendment) Shave. Your. Head. Hippie!

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CONCRETE ELITE – *Iron Rose* LP (Longshot / Rebellion): We've been waiting five years for this record! CONCRETE ELITE (née CONCRETE) finally pulled together an LP of nine original songs that is so heavy you could use it as a ship's anchor. The sometimes crawling speed, deep vocals, and touches of hardcore stomp make me think of sounds that came out of Japan in the '90s, not Austin, TX in 2017. *Iron Rose* isn't good cuz it sounds like other good shit, it stands on its own because of the power and strength it contains. From "Men at Peace": *"We choose this life / We live it through and through / If his enemy is me / His enemy is you / We're men at peace / But if you want war / We'll give you war."* From beginning to end CONCRETE ELITE deliver a cogent message of personal value and a rebuke of victimhood. From the opener "Stronger than Ever Before": *"A lot has happened / Since the last time we spoke / I lost my mother / We lost a father / The sun keeps rising / We were built to cope / Keep marching forward / Into the unknown / Stronger! Stronger than ever before!"* The fucking zeitgeist of American Oi! Get this and look for it on next year's best of 2017 lists.

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KOTTEN – Live Demo 2017: OK! Hoolsrock from Solingen, Germany. If you like your punk somewhere between Viking rock and Oi!, with a dash of pub singalongs, the faux genre of hoolsrock is for you. This is a raw live demo with ten songs, most of which can be found on a better recorded demo from a few years ago. But, whatever, it gives me an excuse to review a good band. Some songs are cleaner than others; "Flammendes Herz," "Hooligans," and "Angela" are standouts, while "All die Jahre" and "Gelb und Blaue" sound like the band was taking shots with the crowd while they recorded. Despite the quality the spirit shines through on all tracks. From what I can decipher these dudes and crew are mourning the demise of their hometown club of FC Union Solingen that went bankrupt in 2012. Songs deal with being a diehard, wearing the *gelb und blau*, drinking beer, telling Angela Merkel to piss off, and not being a "PC baby." For fans of B SQAUDRON, RANGAISTUSPOTKU, flares and banners, New Balance, and those CP parkas with the built-in goggles. Give a listen while you wait for their forthcoming split and EP: kottenoi.bandcamp.com

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LION'S SHARE – Demo 2017: Oh, Canada! I don't trust you cuz I think you think you're better than us. Just a hunch! But I can't shit on your population entirely cuz they produce a ton of great Oi! LION'S SHARE is a grip of Newfies who hail from St. John's aka The End of the World. These are the joys of Oi! Or maybe the joys of the internet? LION'S SHARE plays a nice amalgam of UK82 influenced pogo/stomp and the rainy-Oi! sounds of '80s Britain and Italy. It's dark, it's snarling, it's urgent and has just the right amount of dirt. Think RIXE and ALTERNATE

ACTION smooching their way into a love child. LION'S SHARE is that miracle baby. Great stuff. Listen at: lionssharepunk.bandcamp.com then contact them for a tape.

***

TOP DOG – *Razor Reg* EP (Longshot / Rebellion): The Kray twins live on! Well, in this case, Reggie lives on. Who doesn't love a catchy Oi! tune about violent criminals? The title track off of TOP DOG's second EP will find a place in history alongside odes to Barry Prudom and Harry May. Fitting seeing as TOP DOG is among a small group of current British bands ably channeling the first wave of British Oi! Looking at TOP DOG, I'd venture a couple members were in the crowd at those early shows.

Razor Reg contains four songs. The title track, which opens up side A, is the obvious winner. Coming in at a lagging second is the side B closer, "Fear No Foe." I find the content of "Our Turf" and "Riff Raff" to be boring, PG-13, Oi! cliché. Their amazing song "Botchergate," from the first EP, is a better "Our Turf" tune than "Our Turf," which at no time names the turf they're referring to. It's like when PETEY PABLO tried to get us hyped by repping the *"whole world baby!"* I'm like, "what, we better than Mars?" It's too broad. "Riff Raff" is clunkier than what TOP DOG regularly produces; that's not terrible, a band is gonna break some eggs. All in this, is a B- of an EP. I'm glad I bought it and I look forward to their next release.

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YESTERDAY'S HEROES - *Los Héroes Del Ayer* EP (Une Force, Un Hymne): For the sake of transparency, YESTERDAY'S HEROES are a band Numa from LITOVSK implicated in alleged right-wing violence—no sources cited—when he wrote into *MRR* in regards to the acceptance and enjoyment of Oi! in left-wing circles and his displeasure thereof.

I've searched the internet looking for anything that tips the scales from "average" skinhead band into "sketch" territory using previous flags that have been raised by the editors as possible points of contention and the band is clean as far as patriotic Oi! is concerned. They play with ska bands and spiky punx that are for sure sporting circle-As but, if you're an anarchist who's got no love for those who love their country, YESTERDAY'S HEROES ain't the band for yall. If you're a fan of rough and ready South American Oi!, these *medellinense* are the edge of the knife. There is an almost youth crew quality to the choruses that makes me think of pile ons and finger pointing; it's not hardcore, though. Sometimes, there is a deedle-deedle metal-ness to the guitar that pushes this from *ordinario* to *estupendo*. Their message is clear—they have love for their Colombian history and a dislike of Spain's influence and those who fly foreign flags in Colombia. Cuz they're good skinheads they sing about being crucified for being skins; for shame, society! Then, they invite folks who feel beat down to join the skinhead cult: read this inspiring inscription—translated from the Spanish —from, "Bienvenidos": *"Welcome everyone! / The ark is very large / Laughter is not lacking / Welcome everyone! / To cowardly infamies we were subjected / Welcome everyone! / It does not matter here we are / The years do not pass / Welcome everyone! / We were always right! / It's never too late to find the way / It's never too late to open your eyes / It's never too late not to be a lamb / Here we show you what honor is!"* Yes sir! Loyal Supporters of Oi! need to scoop up a copy of this and their previous EP, *La Llama Que Nunca Se Apaga,* before they're gone and you're left spinning whatever Pirate's Press tells you is acceptable Oi! Blam!

***

That's it this month! Next month we got some stuff from Houston, Portland, Japan, France, and Ukraine! And probably more! Thanks for reading!

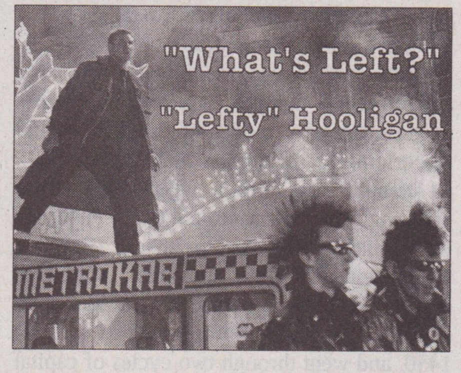
ENDNOTES:

+ AmericanBootGang@gmail.com is the place to complain, congratulate and correct. And if you have a band that fits *somewhere* into Oi!'s big boat lemme know. Positive reviews not guaranteed.

+ I want fewer laws, not more. If you want to spoil a good BBQ with tiresome leftist cynicism that's your right cuz this is America and not Germany or Sweden. It should be noted I'm just as burnt out with anti-SJW YouTube Gargamels. Namaste away.

+ It should also be noted for History's sake that the 8th RANCID album *Trouble Maker* just came out. And, because MRR is a time capsule of sorts, let me make the following clear to future readers: Lars is (for the moment) still a skinhead who wears Ronald McDonald boots, Tim Armstrong resembles an anorexic Bam Bam Bigelow (iBrain it) if Bam Bam Bigelow had a beard that was a member of a GBH cover band. He still moves and sounds like a Muppet. Matt Freeman is always the same. And their song "Bovver Rock And Roll" is understood to be a blatant grab at the (now waning) bovver revival. GoogleRetna *Chipmunk Punk.* Same same. Still, *Trouble Maker* is better than their last two records but not as good as *Indestructible.* Also, this isn't a review. It's informational.

+ Lastly, wouldn't it be great if the "Talk Talk" column by Anne R. Key came back? Just something to think on.



Our story so far:

Interregnums are instances of revolutionary class conflict, either regional and diffuse (Great Peasants' War, 1524–25; English Glorious Revolution, 1688) or more consolidated and national (French 1789 Revolution, Russian 1917 Revolution, Spanish 1936–39 civil war). Related regional interregnums were strung together into a broad territorial interregnum (religious conflicts / wars across continental Europe, 1517–1648), while associated national interregnums were linked into a global interregnum (WWI through WWII, 1914–1945).

The French 1789 Revolution gave rise to our modern Left-Right political landscape and modernity itself. The Right is both a revolt against the modern world and a reaction to the Left. In Europe, the moderate Right and reactionary Right were joined by a Fascist Right, while in the United States various radical and new Rights emerged. But in the face of international socialism and communism after WW2, an effort was made by Buckley and the *National Review* to define, unify, and defend an official conservative movement.

When the Left in the 1980s experienced a crisis due to the defeat of organized labor, the collapse of real existing socialist regimes, and the decline of Marxism, the Right underwent a corresponding crisis. More fractious than the Left due to its non-programmatic, non-rational, nature, the Right exploded, particularly in patriot and populist terms. The secular, religious, and xenophobic Right can barely contain the proliferation of groups and ideologies, unlike the Left which neatly divides into anti-authoritarian, parliamentary, and Leninist types.

Because the Right is invariably a reaction to the Left, when things fell apart and the center on the Left could not hold, mere anarchy was loosed both on the Right and the Left. The crisis of the Left was matched by a crisis on the Right—with mindless proliferation, sectarian infighting, and growing Red/Brown crossover on the Right—which in turn marked the beginning of another global interregnum. But what is the cause of this crisis on Left and Right, and of the global interregnum? Is it the fabled Marxist final crisis of capitalism?

First, I need to backtrack.

I call myself paleo, more or less orthodox, and old school in my Marxism when it comes to class struggle, modes of production, and the origins of modernity. Yet I'm also hep, au courant, and with it when it comes to updating my Marxist political economy with a little world systems theory (Braudel, Wallerstein, Arrighi). Capitalism started to develop in embryonic form as a world system of exploitation and appropriation as early as 1450, and went through two cycles of capital accumulation (the Genoese and Dutch cycles) prior to the British cycle which acted as a context for the French 1789 Revolution and Europe's industrial takeoff. So not only is it correct to call the English Civil War (1642-51) a prequel to the bourgeois revolutions that ushered in the modern world, it's clear that the Renaissance prefigured the Enlightenment, and that the modernity of Machiavelli and Hobbes presaged the modernity of Locke and Rousseau. The extensive trading networks, market relations, and commercial expansion of capitalism prior to 1750 did not possess capital's "relentless and systematic development of the productive forces" that the industrialization of the British cycle initiated, as Robert Brenner and Ellen Meiksins Woods noted. Whether we call the period from 1450 to 1750 pre-capitalism, proto-capitalism, or market capitalism, we need to distinguish it from post-1750 modern capitalism proper. Hence, the use of the French 1789 Revolution as a convenient benchmark for the advent of modern industrial capitalism, modernity, and modern Left-Right politics.

The Marxist-influenced world systems school argues that each cycle of capital accumulation responsible for the rise of the current world economy is comprised of commercial, production, and financial phases. The commercial phase is characterized by making profit from trade and commerce—simple circulation and exchange. The production phase is distinguished by making profit from the whole process of industrialization—building factories to produce commodities, hiring workers, paying them less than what the commodities are sold for, and then valorizing the resultant surplus value into capital. Finally, the financial phase is typified by making profit from investing in everything else that makes money—trade, commerce, manufacturing, factory production, services—which is just one step removed from simple exchange and circulation once again. What is most profitable in this three-phase cycle schema is the production phase because that's where infrastructure is produced, the working class is reproduced, and capital is fully valorized. The commercial and financial phases are merely making money off of circulating money, and the financial phase is seen as capitalism in decline.

This tripartite model is problematic and weakest when it comes to the pre-industrial Genoese and Dutch cycles, and only comes into its own with the British and American cycles. What's more, it's best to take this theory as descriptive rather than prescriptive. The center for world capitalist market power shifted from Genoa, through the Netherlands and Britain, to the United States, where it is predicted to shift again, probably to Asia, since American-centered capitalism is financializing and thus in decline. But will that shift occur? Or are we in the End Time, the final crisis of capitalism?

This model works admirably well in describing what happened when American-based capitalism changed from production to finance, which can be pinned down roughly to 1973. The Keynesianism of the Kennedy / Johnson era transitioned to the neoliberalism of the Thatcher / Reagan era when the political and cultural unrest, growth in social programs and expansion of the welfare state, and strong organized labor and strong middle class of the 1960s gave way to the rollback of government regulations, the welfare state, the public realm, and unions of the 1980s. The neoliberal trend began when the rank-and-file labor rebellions and wildcat strikes of the 1970s were routed, then was formalized with the defeat of organized labor by Reagan's breaking the PATCO unions and Thatcher's trouncing the striking miners, and was finally enshrined with the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Marxism appears to be bankrupt. This is, of course, the beginning of my crisis of the Left and on the Right, and my global interregnum. But why did it happen?

The short, Marxist, answer is that the change from Keynesianism to neoliberalism, from affluence to austerity, from production to finance, is due to a tendency for the rate of profit to fall. If I had to choose between the lively polemics and exhortations of the 1848 Manuscripts, *The Communist Manifesto*, and *Critique of the Gotha Program* versus the dry scientific analysis of *Capital*'sthree volumes, I would choose the former every time. That's because my mathematical chops are seriously lacking, even though I think there are insights to be had in Marxist economic statistics, formulas, and models. One such outstanding Marxist economist was Henryk Grossman, whose work *The Law of Accumulation and Breakdown of the Capitalist System* attempted to formulate mathematical laws of capital accumulation, how it operates and why it falls short. The tendency for the rate of profit to fall (mainly due to the changing organic composition of capital) can be offset by capitalism's creative destruction (state austerity, economic depression, war).

In the grand scheme of things then, when capitalist production became less and less profitable the economy transitioned to finance capitalism. Neoliberalism as the ideology of finance capitalism is all about deregulating and financializing the economy, rolling back the welfare state, crushing organized labor, and privatizing the public realm to reverse the falling rate of profit, and as such it's a right wing ideology of capitalist decline and crisis. Will this be capitalism's final crisis as originally predicted by Marx himself, or simply the shift of capitalist power in a world economy to Asia as currently predicted by world systems theory? I can't say, since I'm being descriptive and not prescriptive. But is capitalism-without-end really possible, or are we quickly reaching the planet's carrying capacity for cancerous economic growth? That's' a question that will have to wait for a future column.

NOTE: Financial capitalism is a whole system, to include the state and most corporations, not merely the international banking system. This must be made clear in a time of Left / Right Red / Brown crossover politics. I'm particularly leery of talk about "international bankers" or that not-so-clever portmanteau "banksters" because it so easily slips into teleological conspiracy theory and "international Jewish" idiocy.

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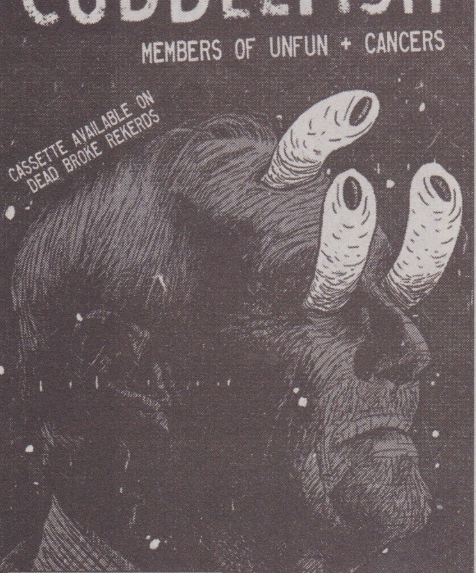

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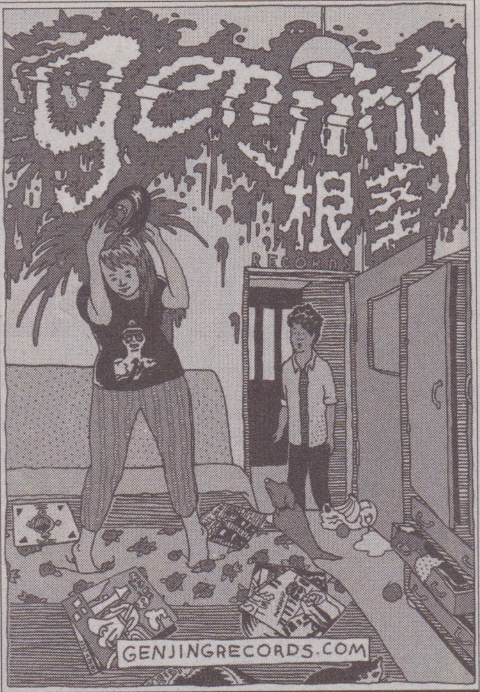
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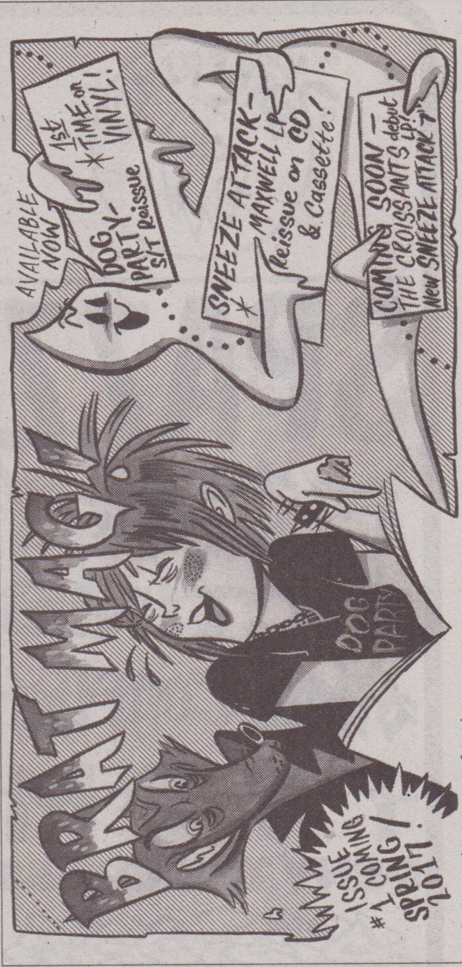
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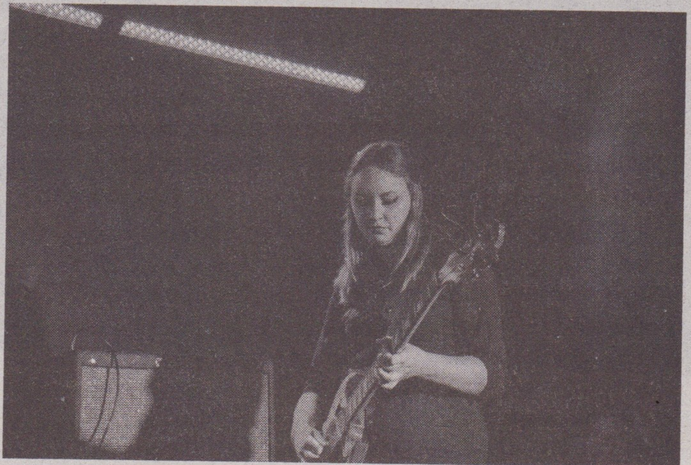
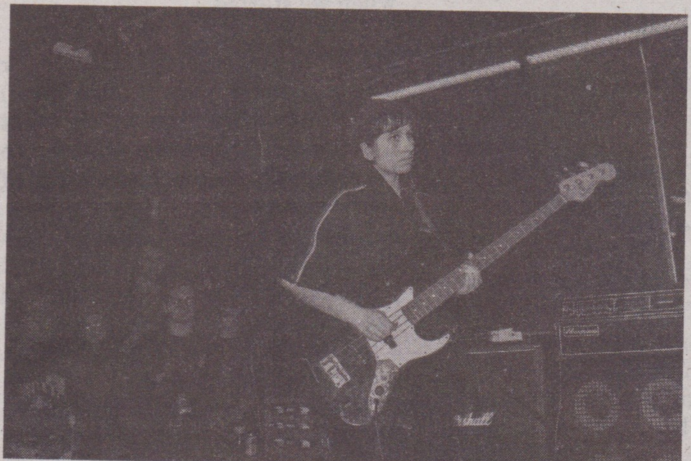
ELIX-R





Ahead of their summer tour with Nihilistic Fit, Elix-r joined me in the living room of the now defunct Lion's Den house venue in Denton to answer a few questions about their history and future, and what it means to be feminine in a male-dominated punk scene.

Interview, introduction, and photos by Andi Harman.

MRR: Mal, you're kind of a new addition to the band. How'd you come into the fold when Jenni [Smyth, former drummer of Elix-r] left?

Mal: Originally, Elix-r asked me to stand in when Jenni was super sick.

Meg: Yeah we asked them like right before we played.

Mal: I was already drunk. [My other band] SSTD had already played and I had just drank a bottle of Fireball and Sophie asked me, "Would you play drums for Elix-r tonight?" That show happened but then like a couple of weeks later, Sophie sent me a text asking if I would be down to be play drums permanently.

Meg: I think Jenni wanted to focus more on Razorbumps. It was all very mutual though. She brought it up to us and we sat down and talked about it and it ended with us all agreeing that we were excited about our respective futures.

MRR: So it was all 100% positive, good vibes at the end.

Meg: I feel like the only thing that's different is we're a lot faster but other than that, I don't know, I think we're pretty

much the same.

Mal: I wanted the band to feel like they made the right choice picking me, if that makes sense, since they were already established.

Meg: We originally wanted someone that was a beginner drummer but realized it wouldn't work. We had already pressed with Jenni so far that we didn't want to put someone completely new to drumming in that position and expect them to catch up with us.

MRR: So the origin of Elix-r is kind of that you just picked up instruments and started playing. When you compare the demo to the *6 Hrs* EP you put out this year, do you feel your approach with writing changed? Did you feel more confident?

Meg: *6 Hrs* was a lot more cohesive I feel like. We spent a good like six months to a year trying to get *started* on the EP. So once we were finally refreshed and had Mal in the band and knew an exact deadline and what we wanted to get done…that's when we were able to put together all the songs we had ideas for. I feel like it's a lot more cohesive and a lot more "our sound." Cuz when the demo was out, we would play shows, and people would tell us, "I can't tell what y'all sound like." We would sound different every time because we were still trying to figure out what direction Elix-r was naturally going to go in. Once we found Mal and started focusing on getting the EP out, it naturally came into its own. For the demo we were so new and everyone was so stoked on us starting out that we had a lot of leniency because we could just put whatever out and people were really stoked on it.

Sophie: And I hated that. We all had to catch up to ourselves.

Meg: This EP was really cool because it was an opportunity to earn the excitement that comes with our band.

Sophie: The demo for me was a way for me to figure out what I was capable of writing in terms of style. I didn't even know what I was getting myself into. It didn't have much intention like the EP does.

Meg: The demo was like, "Yeah, we can make punk songs, super easy, it'll only take a day to write all these songs." We had that attitude about it.

Sophie: And we kind of wanted it to be that touch-and-go and not take it that seriously.

Meg: With the demo we just wanted to put together whatever we can put together, and it turned out really great! But with the EP we had the mentality that we can one-up ourselves.

MRR: When y'all started it seems like it felt "impossible to fail." There was an immediate massive support for Elix-r.

Meg: Yeah, we were booked on festivals really early on.

Lauren: That's something we talked about because we felt kind of weird about it sometimes that we were being asked to play these big shows when we had just put out a demo.

MRR: Was it intentional to have an all-girl band when you started?

Sophie: Yes, very intentional.

MRR: Did you expect the reaction?

Sophie: For me, I think the power of being in a girl band got taken away from me. It didn't feel like we got to say, "we're in a girl band." It felt like bookers and promoters got to say, "I booked a girl band." I don't want to get too much into that because I'm not trying to sound ungrateful for the opportunities we were given but I also don't fully understand why. I didn't see the hype thing coming when we started.

MRR: Do you have any advice for any female (or any marginalized) musician who's trying to start a band in a setting similar to Denton where there are a lot of white dudes?

Sophie: When we started, it was deliberate to be all girls. I had tried jamming with guys. And it's not like the guys I jammed with I had a problem with, but when I wasn't the best guitar player, I felt like I had to try harder. I was never corrected about using a tuner or plugging in or anything, but when I was collaborating with people they were afraid to be as honest with me as they would be with other dudes about how I was playing. And they didn't want to be mean to a girl so that's kind of why I got phased out. Or other bands would get in the way; it wasn't always because I was a girl.

Meg: The two things I saw were guys would be in so many bands that when they started jamming with a girl who's in her first band, they would kind of start to prioritize other bands. And the other thing is a girl might be playing a guitar and dudes would come up and grab it and be like "Oooo I want to play" and start jamming on her gear.

Lauren: That happens all the fucking time!
Meg: ...The advice I have is...to get away from every male... *[laughter]*
Sophie: Seriously, the only reason I'm in bands now is because I sought out girls. They weren't as hard on me about being in my first band. I even tried being in a band with guys who hadn't been in bands before and it *still* didn't work out.
Mal: As a non-binary, non-gender-conforming person, it bothers me when girls haven't been able to jam in a band.

MRR: I've also noticed when male musicians are working on stuff here, they tend to call on people they've already made music with before.
Meg: Or live in the same house with. My advice would be, to sum it up, don't try to infiltrate a scene that is mostly men or whatever. Try to create your own space. Because I tried infiltrating for so long and when it *does* finally work, it's not worth it. You kind of go insane by the time you actually get it to happen.
Sophie: And you've made so many compromises along the way that it isn't going to be what you want.
Lauren: When I moved here, it took me so long to see a girl playing in a band. And even then, it wasn't in the punk scene. Especially in the south and more specifically in Texas, it's kind of unheard of to see that. I agree with Meg. We decided to do our own thing and it worked out well. It's not easy to find people on the same page as you.
Meg: I'd rather make compromises with other women or non-binary or marginalized people than to make compromises with myself to infiltrate some boys club.
Andi: I think there's something to be said for prioritizing marginalized people but doing "all-girl band line-ups" or tokenizing isn't the way to go.
Meg: A local booker wrote a description of us that said something about us being all-girl and we asked him to remove that.
Lauren: It also depends on who's booking the show because it can come off weird if it's some dude that's trying to get together girl bands. But we did play Mass Hysteria and that was a different situation since it was women booking women. I didn't feel weird about that.
Meg: This is Austin had a bunch of female bands but it never felt weird or patronizing.
Sophie: Sometimes the only description they give of our sound is "getting better every day." It feels like we got the Most Improved award sometimes. It's beyond patronizing. What criteria are we using? I don't think our sound fits into a straightforward punk description. We had to make our own space.
Meg: People compare us to Bikini Kill. They'll always expect me to give a speech or something.
Lauren: It's a running joke in the band that Meg is going to do some speech— *[laughter]*
Meg: *I've got something to sayyyyy!*
Lauren: —and unbutton the top button of her jeans. It's just not what we do.
Meg: I literally never talk into the mic though.

MRR: I'm shocked that anyone would compare you to Bikini Kill. How tiny does your index of music references have to be?
Meg: It's happened multiple times. "You're all girls so you must LOVE Bikini Kill." Uh, I actually fucking hate them and it's not a compliment.
Sophie: We played a show in Dallas actually and it was the first time I'd ever played for Oak Cliff people. Some guy played "Oh Bondage Up Yours!" after we played and said, "I played this for you guys. I hate it when punks don't know punk songs. You know this band right?" I don't really need some 40 year old DJ talking down to me about what songs punks should know.

MRR: What was the inspiration for the *6 Hrs* EP?
Meg: In the lyrics, *6 Hrs* is about being completely disillusioned for 6 hours at a time. The intro is a poem I'd written and performed beforehand. Last minute we decided we needed some more stuff so I brought it in. That was really fun. From here on out I want to go into more emotional writing. I do abide by my emotions and that's a huge part—radical softness. I think that's what *6 Hrs* is more leading into in the future.

MRR: All of you have other creative outlets, yeah?
Mal: Yeah, I like to keep super busy. I've been in Slimy Member for the past 4 years. I did SSTD, which was a group where we could kind of learn new instruments. Now I'm in Ugly, the same people, but in a new band.
Sophie: Me and Lauren are also in Pink Thing.
Lauren: Yeah and I'm in the Noids.

MRR: This is kinda wacky but I've been very into self-care during these trying times. Does anybody have a recipe or go-to comfort meal or fun rituals/tinctures?
Sophie: I've started eating better. I don't give myself much allowance to have fun or not take care of myself anymore. I need to be mentally clear all the time. I'm trying to be more present than ever. I wish I could just chow down on macaroni and cheese. I miss it so fucking much.
Lauren: I've been making stuffed poblanos. They're great for when you're high and also have a fridge full of poblanos.
Meg: As far as food goes, I eat like shit. So all of my self-care (which if you aren't eating right is probably stupid) goes to skincare and hair care and body care. I've been making so many skin formulas and—
Lauren: —elixirs.

MRR: You gotta start selling them as merch!

Meg: I do actually have an energy elixir with gotu kola and stuff. And it works! It's like a coffee, like I just take a swig out of it in the morning and it really helps with depression. Like if I just want to lay in bed all day, I'll do a shot and be like, "I'll *sit up* in bed all day!"

Sophie: And the other day, Mal and I went home early and decided not to drink, and just hang out, and they were like, "I'm going home to make a slice of pizza with pizza rolls, and another slice of pizza on top, like a sandwich"

MRR: I feel like I'm getting acne just thinking about that.

Meg: It's OK, I can make some stuff for that!

MRR: Do you have a favorite memory as a band?

Sophie: Speaking of us getting booked on shows we probably weren't ready for, we played EINOK like four months into us being a band. We played it and it was fine. We were so new and we were like, "Why are we playing with Gag?"

Meg: Yeah but we thought we could be rock stars and play all of these shows back to back to back and go on road trips—

Lauren: it was just too much for us to handle! So we showed up to EINOK and we were all a little overwhelmed. We were just kind of hiding from the show at one point. We all went and sat inside a Raising Canes and we were there for like four hours straight in a booth losing our minds. I don't even know what we were talking about.

Sophie: We saw a whole bus full of high school basketball players come in and destroy the restaurant. They picked up the mess before we even left.

Meg: We were just talking and watching videos and stuff and looked up and they were trying to close the restaurant. We were like, "guess it's time to go!"

Lauren: We missed a whole show in a city we never go to!

Meg: It was so much fun though.

MRR: Have any of you ever been in a fistfight or a physical altercation?

Meg: I've never actually been in real "fuck you I'm gonna fight you" altercations, but in 7th grade, I don't know what it was we were dealing with, but in the girls locker room we would just beat the shit out of each other. And it was play fighting that would get serious because it would start to hurt. We would have bloody noses and bruises. It was like this middle school girl fight club in the locker room. I have no idea why but I loved it. We were best friends but we would beat the living shit out of one another. There was that and then fighting with brothers. I have six brothers. Never been in a real "I'm going to fight that bitch" kind of fight. I've wanted to! But…

Sophie: I just jump into other people's fights. I'll say "fuck you!" and pour a beer on their head while they're getting punched in the face by someone else. But as soon as they turn to me I'm like, "it wasn't me."

Meg: If any of my friends were in fights, I'd probably jump in.

Sophie: Remember when Bri got handcuffed at the first EINOK? That's when I said to myself, "I need Meg to be the singer of my band." She didn't even look like the same person. She was just screaming at this powertripping mall cop that was handcuffing our friend for getting on the stage.

Meg: He had no right to handcuff her! He wasn't even a real cop! And even if he was, I probably still would have been in his face.

Sophie: And then Roz goes up to him and said, "You've pissed off an entire club of punks. The cops are on the way and we're gonna kick your ass before they even get here and we'll all be gone before they show up so you need to take her out of cuffs right now." Or something like that.

Meg: Yeah, he was saying some scary ass shit.

Sophie: And we didn't even know him that well yet.

Meg: That's how we met him.

MRR: Any last comments?

Meg: Can we give a shoutout to Pharm House? Ryan recorded all of our stuff and helped us put it on tape. They bent over backwards to help us get the EP ready.

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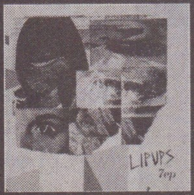

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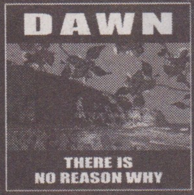
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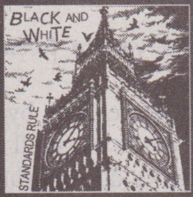
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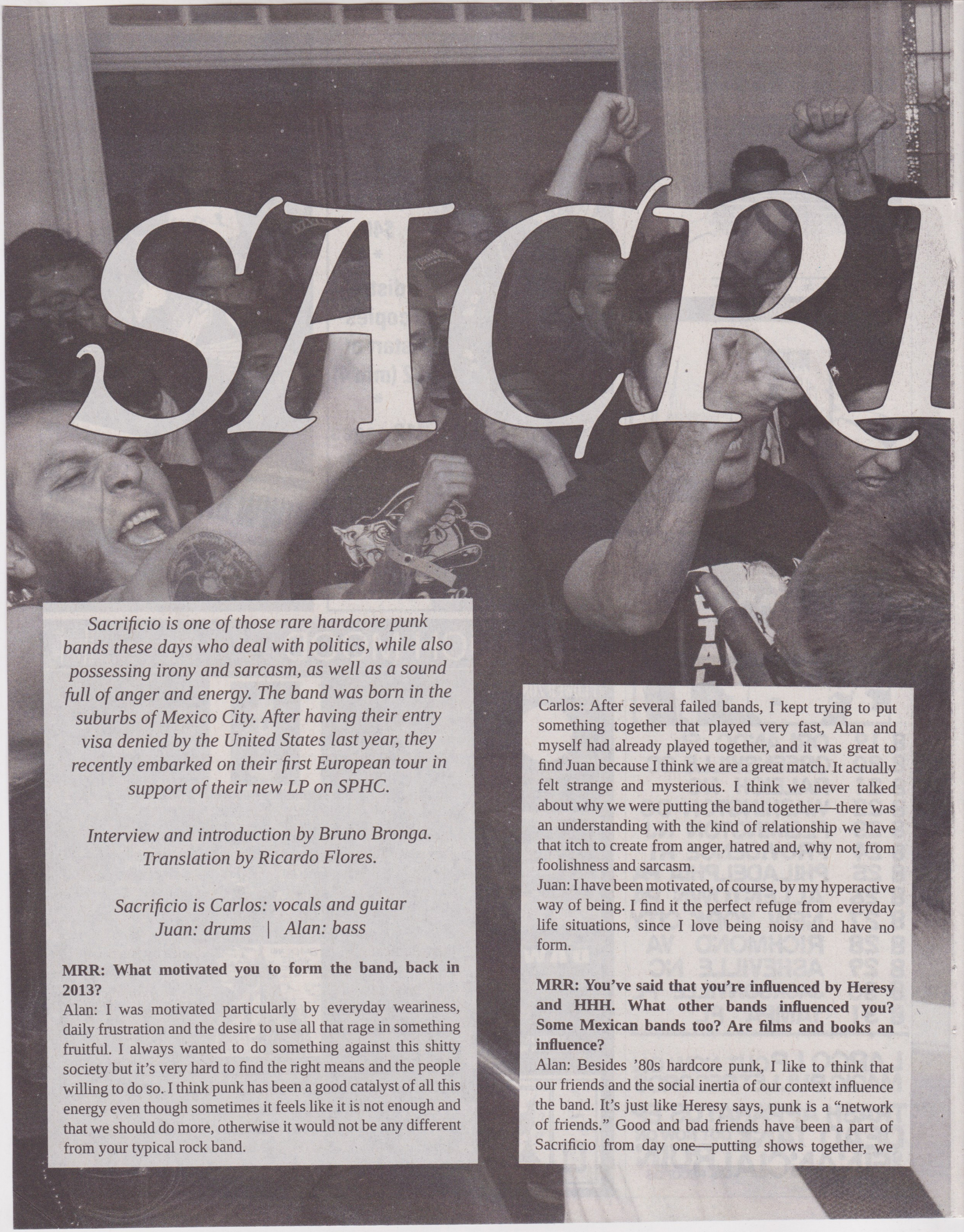
DEBAUCH015:BALLADMEN-Dear Old-Fashioned Rhythm(LP)
DEB0017:BLACK AND WHITE-Standards Rule/Boring Job(7")

SACRI



Sacrificio is one of those rare hardcore punk bands these days who deal with politics, while also possessing irony and sarcasm, as well as a sound full of anger and energy. The band was born in the suburbs of Mexico City. After having their entry visa denied by the United States last year, they recently embarked on their first European tour in support of their new LP on SPHC.

Interview and introduction by Bruno Bronga.
Translation by Ricardo Flores.

Sacrificio is Carlos: vocals and guitar
Juan: drums | Alan: bass

MRR: What motivated you to form the band, back in 2013?

Alan: I was motivated particularly by everyday weariness, daily frustration and the desire to use all that rage in something fruitful. I always wanted to do something against this shitty society but it's very hard to find the right means and the people willing to do so. I think punk has been a good catalyst of all this energy even though sometimes it feels like it is not enough and that we should do more, otherwise it would not be any different from your typical rock band.

Carlos: After several failed bands, I kept trying to put something together that played very fast, Alan and myself had already played together, and it was great to find Juan because I think we are a great match. It actually felt strange and mysterious. I think we never talked about why we were putting the band together—there was an understanding with the kind of relationship we have that itch to create from anger, hatred and, why not, from foolishness and sarcasm.

Juan: I have been motivated, of course, by my hyperactive way of being. I find it the perfect refuge from everyday life situations, since I love being noisy and have no form.

MRR: You've said that you're influenced by Heresy and HHH. What other bands influenced you? Some Mexican bands too? Are films and books an influence?

Alan: Besides '80s hardcore punk, I like to think that our friends and the social inertia of our context influence the band. It's just like Heresy says, punk is a "network of friends." Good and bad friends have been a part of Sacrificio from day one—putting shows together, we

FICIO

ORPOREAL
SPAZZ
OSIS

make music about them and for them, we play together and, without question, we enjoy doing things when they are present. Regarding the inertia, when we started the band, we were involved with very active protest groups since there was a general social movement against the political system and the new presidential administration in 2012. Today, none or very little of that still exists and we have fallen into disillusion and pessimism. Several anarchist groups disappeared, close friends vanished into banality of present life, and many others just started looking the other way. That is also part of Sacrificio—we were never really convinced of changing things, but at least we were more motivated. Now we are more pessimistic than ever and we believe close to nothing in people, however, we keep looking to do things differently and in a way we think is right. We only have punk left.

Carlos: Alan couldn't have said it any better. Adding to his answer, the title of the LP, *Pulidores de Tumbas* (tomb polishers), is inspired by the book *Cómo Sobreviven los Marginales* (How do marginalized people survive), which is a social anthropological study on a community near the area we all live in, that is known for getting to the city by the big movement of small towns towards Mexico City during the 1960s. A great number of those people would make a living out of washing carpets and polishing tombs since there were many cemeteries nearby. Directly or indirectly, our families were a part of that centralization and arrival to the big city, which is why it seemed to have a great meaning to us. The song that has that name is not inspired by the book. It has a word play where you can understand either "disappeared students by those sons of bitches" or "because of those motherfuckers we keep digging graves…" At the end, those who force violence on people, whether politically active or not (even though in this case is more focused in the political aspect), the ones maintaining the marginalization, are in the same way our enemies.

Juan: Particularly I have had a strong influence by Brazilian punk and HC. I'm thankful I found Carlos and Alan because they made me go back to HC! Of course we have those very crazy Mexican bands like Atoxxxico, Empirismo, Decontrol and Herejía, to name a few.

MRR: Sacrificio is on the compilation K7 *La Muerte Gobierna,* a benefit for the people that fight for land in Oaxaca. Ten years ago, many people from the punk community talked about this issue but nowadays we don't hear much. How is the situation there nowadays?

Explain a little more about Oaxaca's problems for the readers who don't know what is happening there.

Alan: In the south region of Mexico, particularly in the states of Chiapas, Oaxaca, and Guerrero, radical protest movements against the political, social and economic capitalist system have been historically developed. Sadly the poorest regions have the highest number of injustices. Organizations of students, teachers, farm workers and indigenous people are highly politically active in that area. There is a lot of history about it, great struggles and also a lot of transgression against the ones that have less protest. The compilation *La Muerte Gobierna* (death rules) supports the indigenous communities in the Tehuantepec Isthmus in their struggle to defend their original land. There are different interesting projects that adopt horizontal organizational forms and anti-authoritarian political positions that have as their goal the autonomy of communities. I would like to share this link where you can get more information about this topic: vientolibertario.wordpress.com.

Carlos: I have to admit that what I was trying to do with the label I have, Grabaciones Pinche Engnedro, didn't turn out the way I was expecting given my lack of organization, and that it was very difficult to record all the bands. It took too long. I wanted to link music with political work, at least with a key and significative topic, like the one in Oaxaca and other places at the time. I couldn't do it alone, and at the end my personal life (school and work) didn't let me continue editing other tape release to include other bands. I sold the tapes with propaganda included. I still have the money saved and another 100 tapes that I hope I can dub and sell.

MRR: Sacrificio's last LP (*Pulidores de Tumbas*) is really a big step forward in terms of the sound. The songs are really tight and violent, with a lot more details, variations and a great record quality, loud and noisy. The tuning and mating between bass and drums is something to be noticed. How did you get this sound? Has everyone learned more about your instruments? Another recording studio? Can you control anger and hatred better?

Carlos: Every Sacrificio recording has been done by me, or at least most of them. The demo was my first or second try at recording—I've never been professional, I just learnt from a friend who has a more formal studio. For the *Juventud Descerebrada* EP several people helped and to this date I´m not very convinced by how it turned out. We wanted this LP to sound hard and we decided to try to do it with better equipment we borrowed from friends and it just came out that way. Speaking of the order of the record, I insisted to those guys if we could do one long recording session. Listening to my all-time favorite albums, what they have in common is that to me they are like a novel, they have a certain structure that walks you through the will of the person who wrote it. That´s what I wanted, that it wasn't just a compilation of songs put together just because. I think that in general it is something very difficult to accomplish. I can't say that we accomplished that—maybe you guys will think it's way too long and tedious! I don't know if we will try to record anything again, time will tell.

Juan: For me I had to gain better stamina to keep up with the pace! We pushed ourselves harder, that´s true, and it is the reflection of different mixed feelings throughout the creation of this LP, I liked how it turned out and the crazy mixture of ideas.

MRR: The third song on the album is "José Vasconcelos era Nazi." Who is José Vasconcelos?

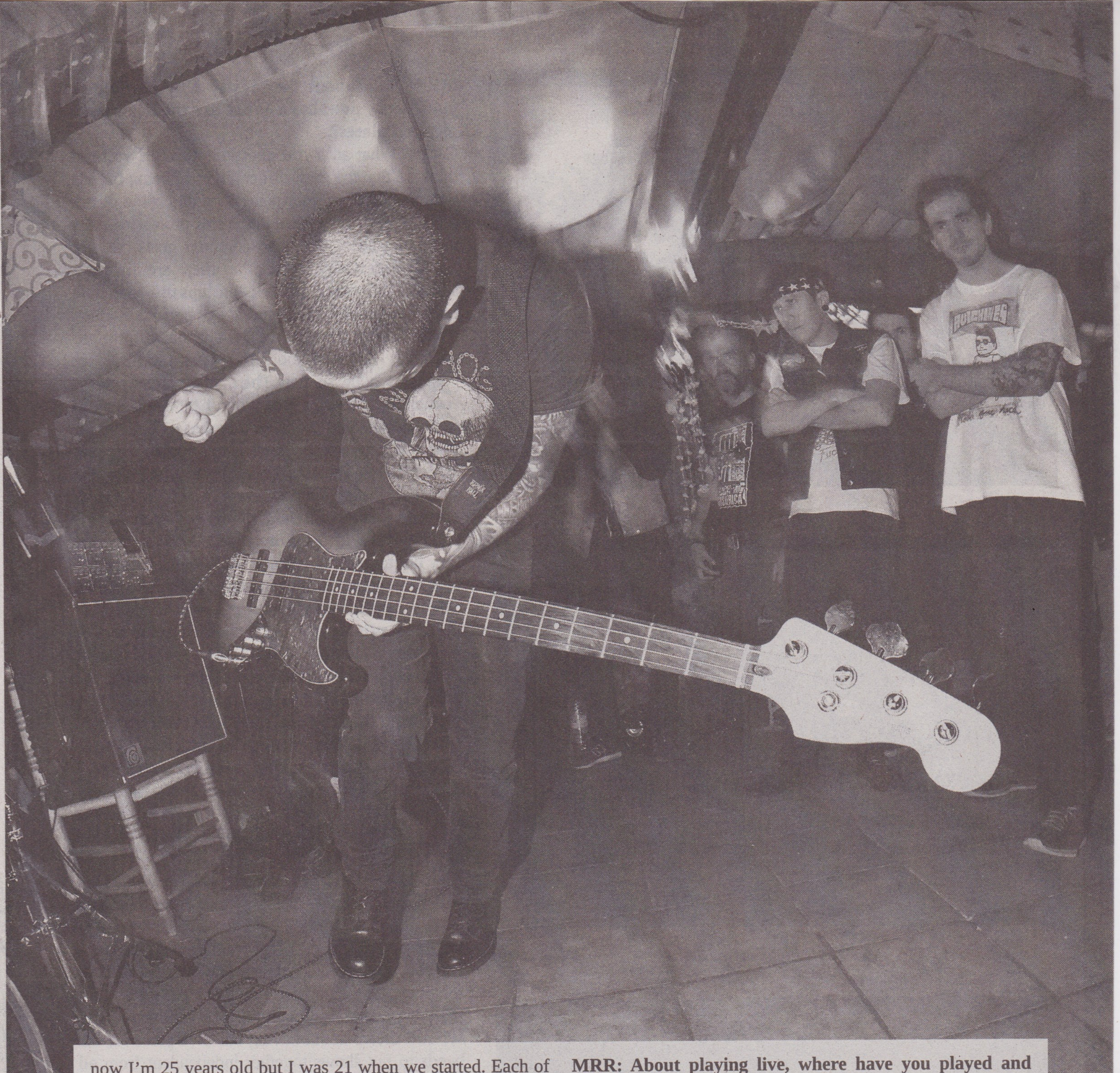
Alan: José Vasconcelos was an important political figure in Mexico after the Revolution. He was in charge of the educational system and was the head of the national university that later became UNAM (National Autonomous University of Mexico). It's funny because this important thinker that shaped how education is taught here is known for sympathizing with the German National Socialist regime, which means he was a Nazi (ay cabrón). Obviously the song is not a history lesson but we were inspired by that to talk about the indoctrination we have endured since we are kids through academic education and the values promoted by the government.

Carlos: He also was the publisher of a magazine with evident sympathy with the German Regime, that old bastard. The song talks about three main topics: school as a "class trampoline," school as normalizer of bullshit, and how we are in it. We have all known with very little opportunities that when they get a diploma and a "better" job, they start hating the poor, classic vision of life where "if I could do it, anyone can, and if you don't do it is because you're a mediocre person." Obviously this is a simpleton, individualistic vision about a very complex situation. We know that the educational offered by the State is not enough for the demand, even more absurd, the working opportunities, going to college does not guarantee a dignified job, which unfortunately creates disappointment for the youth and a strong disinterest for education. Even worse, going to school and not questioning anything that is being taught. Oh but, everybody is complaining about the so-called "ninis" (the ones that don't study and don't work), when in reality they fucking have nothing to pick from. At the end I think is that verse in the lyrics "*I'm always wasting my time,*" even though we all work and had the chance to go to school, but we also a part of that disappointment.

MRR: On song number seven ("Estar pedo no basta"), you say "*Esta ciudad me sigue jodiendo y estar pedo no basta.*" The title of track ten is "Vendi mi Alma" and the lyrics say "*Detesto trabajar!*" How old are you? What you do for a living?

Alan: When we started we were still attending school and would use most of our free time to hang out. I was 23 years old. Today, the three of us have to earn a living in shitty jobs that don't pay enough in a bad economy in an unbearable city. To escape from this miserable reality most of the time we just get drunk and we look for that thrill with some cheap drugs. Of course this has never been enough to feel good and we clearly know that is not a solution—that's why we came up with "*estar pedo no basta*" (being drunk is not enough). I firmly believe that we could do other things against what marginalizes us. We just need to make up our minds.

Carlos: That's true, although maybe it's too late to change. Right



now I'm 25 years old but I was 21 when we started. Each of us do something different. Personally there isn't something I enjoy as much as playing music although I don't see myself making a living out of it, so I study and do something totally apart, so I guess this is a way to escape from reality, this (almost) non lucrative mean of expression where we do what we do and scream about what we think and feel.

Juan: I am 27 years old and I have this bullshit delivery job, and even though I enjoy it for the time being, my other working experiences have not been good. You take all this bullshit just to have some status and to take money home in order to survive, on top of that you have to grateful. Death to those fuckers.

MRR: About playing live, where have you played and where do you want to go? What great bands you shared the stage with?

Carlos: So far we've played all over Mexico: Leon, Aguascalientes, Monterrey, Guadalajara, Puebla, Tampico, San Luis Potosí, Queretaro, Tuxtla, San Cristobal, Ecatepec. In May this year we are did our first tour out of Mexico—we named it "Vendí Mi Alma" (I Sold my Soul), like one of our songs. We wanted to tour United States last year but Juan and myself got denied the visas to get in USA, and Alan didn't want to try after that. Mmmmmh, here we have shared the stage with S.H.I.T., Stoic Violence, Sin Orden, Ritual Control, Gas Rag, Capitalist Casualties, DHK, Glue, Piss, Obedience, Warthog, Institute, I can´t remember of anything more.

MRR: Talk about the Mexico City hardcore / punk scene nowadays. What are the hot bands, gigs and places?

Carlos: What an awful question! Lately I've been thinking that the most difficult part of being friends with people from your generation and some others a bit older to do something "semi professional." I mean, we share likes and common goals, we are not all necessarily friends, but there are always a series of informal social relationships that somehow imply reciprocity, at the end it's all personal (which makes it even harder), we are not that cold to see ourselves just like tools to others (at least not yet), or I hope so not. There is a watered down economical presence that I don't think we should consider personal profit, in this sense I believe we have a healthy scene. There is this part in our song "Descontento Social" (social unrest) that goes "*the so-called disappointment doesn´t turn into action that has become a trend*." by the end of the day it is a reflection of our generation. At the same time I try not to generalize since we have acquaintances who are not punk while remaining politically active. The scene that we are part of is a bit strange, I think it has what is needed to be consider some sort of community, although it also lacks a lot of things. It is sometimes very trivial and banal, we might not escape from that too. We have to admit that as a band we haven't tried to change anything other than play music, so let's take this as self-criticism. Despite all that, it's always exciting to see Prision Oculta, I also really like Desgrasia Jubenil, Riña, Reptoides from Monterrey. I also think it´s great experience to see FZ10 live, and Alan's other bands: Malcria and Estado.

Alan: Ironically, a city this big has no venues for underground things. Basically there are only two options to play a show, either find a place for rent in the outskirts of the city, or go to bars. Each has pros and cons, but in reality there are no venues or spaces for punk. The bars that would let you play once will never do it again and it's also very expensive. We still dream about having our own place for the bands to put shows together independent from all the show business bullshit. Now, in regards of the scene, every community is a direct reflection of the society where it develops itself, tendencies, fashion, popularity, competition, profit, egotism, anyway, there is an infinity of shit just like everywhere else but there is also a lot of good things. There is a lot of honest people doing and sharing things they like, there is a great amount of incredible people and bands nowadays.

sacrificiodf.bandcamp.com

ALICE BAG

I walk into the dimly lit bar wondering if Alice Bag is here, and how to find her. I needn't have worried; the shock of pink hair is easy to spot. The godmother of punk is seated next to Michelle Cruz Gonzales, AKA Todd Spitboy, casually grinning and drinking a hot toddy. Once she gets up from the bar though, there's no slowing down; during the first band she can barely stand still, pogoing and stretching up on her heels to take photos. On stage she is almost impossible to capture; a pink blur in a houndstooth dress zooming around the room, irrepressible and electric. In between songs she talks about everything from date rape to the Chicano Moratorium to gender fluidity, joking that she's "in school teacher mode" (a reference to her many years as an elementary school teacher), but rather than bored, she has the crowd hanging onto her words. These people are here to see an early Xicana punk icon, and you can tell she takes that responsibility seriously.

When I think of Alice Bag, there's one particular image that encapsulates what she means to punk—her cover of Slash, *bra and bowtie visible, upper lids covered in metallic silver, eyes vacant, lips slightly open, exuding confidence and sex, a vampire who hasn't decided if she's going to bite yet. Though the picture was taken nearly 40 years ago, Alice is still that same provocateur, continuing to make subversive works of art, tour the world, and speak out against injustice. If her show that night in Oakland proved anything, it's that we still desperately needs firebrands like Alice to make us dance and wake us the fuck up.*

Alice finishes her set and leaves the stage, gloriously sweaty. I watch her take a selfie with a young fan wearing a Selena shirt and smile. This is punk in 2017, and I love it.

Interview and introduction by Arielle Burgdorf.
Photos courtesy of Alice Bag and Louis Jacinto.

MRR: Tell us about your first guitar.
My first guitar was a Sears Silvertone 1449. It was black with silver glittery sparkles and I was really attached to it, but unfortunately lost it when I was living at The Canterbury.

MRR: You've been doing amazing work with your women in punk archive. Why did you feel the need to start doing these interviews?
I felt that the role of women in the early punk scene was being slowly erased. I would read books or articles about the scene and the focus was always on the dudes. Please don't get me wrong—I love the guys in the early scene but the scene had a beautifully balanced energy because it drew from so many different sources.

The L.A. scene was rich in diversity, the perfect soil in which to grow creativity, in which to hear voices that had been silenced in the past. The problem was that outsiders would come around years later without knowing very much about our community and write the sort of pieces they'd been reading for years. The scene would be portrayed not only as male-dominated but as white and straight. That just wasn't the case and that misinformation made me want to do something to showcase the women who were instrumental in creating punk in L.A.

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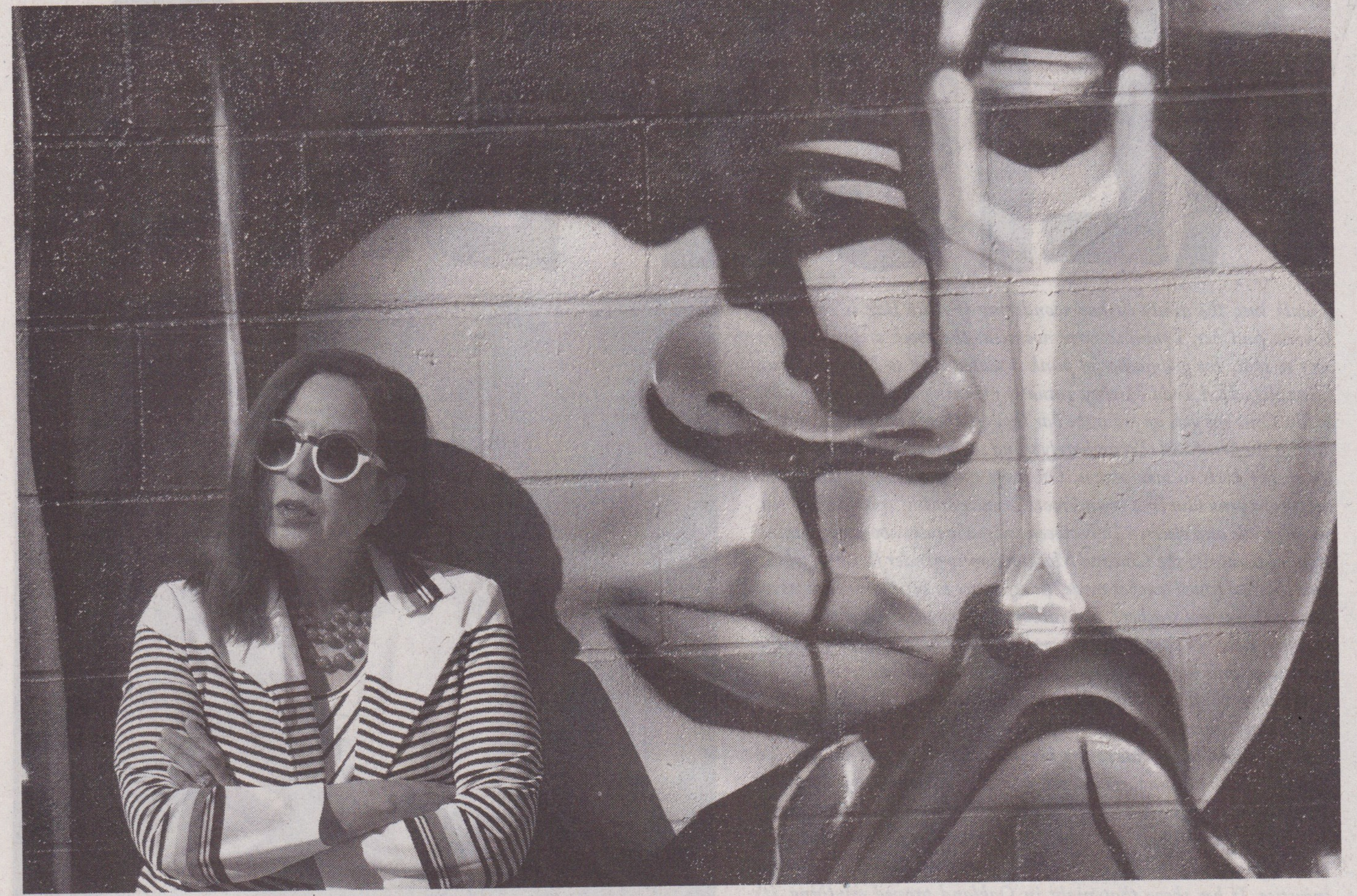


MRR: Did you learn anything new about the scene from talking to people?

I learned that the women in the band Backstage Pass deserved a lot of credit for helping to create The Masque. They co-signed the lease for the building in which the club / rehearsal studio / community space was housed. They put in physical labor, converting a bomb shelter into rehearsal rooms. The Masque was very important to the early punk community. Brendan Mullen was instrumental in keeping that place open and making it hospitable to all of us but equally important were the women of Backstage Pass, without whom that venue might have never existed. It was a story that was not being told.

MRR: How do your daughters feel about your wild past? Do they think it's cool or are they like "Oh god, Mom. That's so embarrassing!"?

My daughters are all supportive of me but none of them are huge punk fans. My youngest went through several years where she was embarrassed to be seen with me but I think that's typical teen behavior. My stepdaughters never felt the need to rebel against their stepmom. They go to my concerts and readings and one of my stepdaughters, Chelsea, sings backup vocals on my record and occasionally joins me on stage. She has a gorgeous voice and I am very proud of her and of all my girls.

MRR: How does it feel to be a punk icon in a scene with younger people whose work is influenced by your own? Do you ever feel pressure or like you trapped inside an image of yourself?

I really don't think of myself that way. I think each generation, if they do their job, makes things a little better for the next. I don't feel external pressure to be anything I'm not. I try to live up to my own imagination's best version of myself.

MRR: Do you feel there's a tendency to romanticize the early punk scene?

It was a pretty special scene so I think it would be a true romance rather than nostalgic fictionalization. In my memory, it stands out as a brief moment in time when you were either part of the mainstream or pushing against the status quo with every creative tool in your toolbox. It was a very dynamic and memorable time.

MRR: You've been a part of so many different kinds of music and art over the years. What's it like to work in so many different mediums (singing, writing, performing, etc.), and do you have a preference?

As an artist, I crave innovation so I like trying out different ways of expressing myself. I find painting really soothing; I love to put on music or an audiobook and paint. Writing is more like work for me but it provides a feeling of satisfaction. I enjoy the introspective elements that go with the type of writing I do. I think of myself primarily as a musician, a songwriter and performer and music remains my favorite means of self-expression.

MRR: Cholita! was one of my favorite things you've ever done, especially the video for "No Controles." Can you talk a little about the filming of that and working with Vaginal Creme Davis?

I love that video too, it's so campy! We filmed most of it in MacArthur Park. Ms. Davis had a friend who lived in an apartment near the park where we were able to get dressed and have our make up and hair done. We also filmed a few scenes in the courtyard of that apartment building.

Fertile La Toya Jackson was extremely nervous while we were shooting our scenes in MacArthur Park because we were filming in broad daylight, very close to the school where we both worked. Neither his students nor the parents of his students had ever seen him in drag. Fertile was certain that he spotted one his students looking at him suspiciously and was worried that he'd been recognized and that the parents might complain to administrators at the school but none of that happened. The poor kid probably thought he was hallucinating—that voluptuous woman couldn't be Mr. Hernandez... maybe it was his sister! Anyway, that video captures the fun element of Cholita!, which I have to say is still one of my favorite musical projects. We were all friends and of course, Vaginal and Fertile are both incredibly creative and talented artists, so the project really had everything going for it.

MRR: You were also in Castration Squad, one of the earliest death rock bands. Do you relate to that scene much? How do you feel like it's different from the punk scene?

In the early days of punk there was a lot of diversity of expression, not only in sound but in terms of personal style and lifestyle. Punk and death rock are sisters who grew up together, then went off in different directions but will always share the same mother. I'm not involved in the death rock scene but I do like the music and appreciate the aesthetic.

MRR: I heard Los Bros Hernandez speak recently and they were saying that after all years of being Chicano outsiders, they'd inadvertently paved the way for the success of these more popular white artists like Daniel Clowes, or made a comic about Frida Kahlo but wouldn't see it become popular until she was "discovered" by Madonna—is that something you relate to, this kind of gentrification in art?

I don't gauge my success by other people's standards; I define success in my own terms. I write, paint and play music about whatever I want and that is success for me. I have enough to eat, I have shelter, I have respect from the people I respect and I am a threat to people who piss me off. I am free from the desire for mainstream recognition. I refuse to play that game. Los Bros Hernandez are extremely talented and so is Daniel Clowes. It's important to realize that whenever art is discovered by the mainstream there is a real risk of it being colonized and monetized.

MRR: You participated in a lot of cross dressing and general rejection of gender roles both when performing and as part of your lifestyle, and you wrote about sleeping with people of all genders in *Violence Girl*. Do you identify as queer? What does that word mean to you?

Yes, I identify as Queer.

In terms of sexuality, I had considered myself bisexual since I was a teen. These days as people move away from speaking of gender in binary terms I find that the descriptor I've used most of my life may be out of date as well.

I think of the word "queer" as a term that speaks not only to how I see myself but also to how a binary and heteronormative world sees me. For me, the word "queer" is an affirmation that my sexuality is valid and healthy, that I can express my gender in any way I choose and that I am willing to stand up and take action against those who would try to suppress my ability to present myself as I see fit or attempt to stop me from loving whomever I want to love.

In terms of gender, I think of gender fluidity as something that has traditionally been fear-inducing for mainstream America, not just in terms of cross-dressing but because there are mannerisms, speech, and behavioral codes associated with being male or female. I see myself in more androgynous terms. I want to be able to live without the types of restrictions that try to force you to conform to gender stereotypes.

I wear dresses a lot, I find them comfortable. I also sometimes wear make-up, so my presentation is often seen as feminine but my outspokenness, my aggressiveness, my willingness to engage in confrontations and my mannerisms are often seen as masculine traits. I've experienced the discrimination that goes along with being seen as female and it has turned me into a feminist but I have also faced disapproval from people who feel my behavior doesn't match what is expected of a woman. I don't consider myself trans but I'm not sure that I always see myself as cis either. I almost feel that to be either of those things forces me to think in binary terms and I'd rather not go there.

MRR: After *Violence Girl* got critical acclaim, you decided to self-publish your next book, *Pipe Bomb for the Soul*. Why was that? You use some very creative formatting for the book, including these photographic icons. Was that a conscious choice to disrupt typical narrative style?

While I was touring with *Violence Girl* I often had people ask me for more information about my trip to Nicaragua. So the real motivation to write my second book came from speaking to people. Many seemed curious about Nicaragua under the Sandinistas and wanted to hear more about my experience volunteering there. I decided to self-publish because I wanted to have the experience of having complete control over the creative process. It also felt right for that book. The Sandinista revolution was about self-determination so I wanted to carry that message all the way through to the production and distribution of the book.

As for the use of icons, I did that because I was influenced by *For Dummies* books. I like that they help you pay attention to certain parts of the writing. I put in bite-sized historical facts to help with political perspective and a section called "Upon Reflection" where I could comment on my point of view when I was in my twenties from the vantage point of someone in her fifties, with all the attendant knowledge of age. The icons helped me provide a little extra information without having to disrupt the flow of the narrative. This approach is something that probably wouldn't have been greenlit by a publisher, so having the final say on the format of the book was important to me.

MRR: What was it like living in Nicaragua during such an intense time and how did it shape you as a person?

Pipe Bomb for the Soul is basically my Nicaraguan diary. I kept a journal while I was there in 1986, so in essence the book was already written. I went back and added descriptions and details to make it easier for the reader to understand writing that was originally intended only for personal reading.

I lived with a family in a small home in Estelí, which is a town in the north of Nicaragua. It was an all-female household and the mom had been a Sandinista combatiente. She was a powerful, well-informed woman who guided her daughters lovingly. Every personal relationship in Nicaragua felt political. Every member of that family knew they had a role to play at home to enable their mother to work, it was a microcosm of the revolution. Making meals, doing household chores, volunteering in the community, sharing food with neighbors were all seen as ways to make the revolution a success.

In 1986, Nicaragua was engaged in a war against the U.S. funded Contras so it was indeed a tumultuous time. It was not unusual to hear the sound of gunshots or semi-automatic weapons fired in the night. There were times when I was scared but my desire to learn and volunteer were stronger than my fear. My experiences there really opened my eyes to how our government operates and to how and why the U.S. intervenes in other countries, sometimes installing or propping up tyrannical regimes. I saw some of the real costs of our consumerist culture.

On a personal level, it touched me in many ways. I find it sad that in the United States we are trained from an early age to associate success with financial wealth and the acquisition of things. When I was in Nicaragua, most of the people I met were very poor by U.S. standards but they were happy. There was a popular Sandinista slogan that people liked to repeat: "*Nicaragua: ni se vende, ni se rinde!*" Nicaragua is not for sale and we won't submit. Freedom and self-determination were seen as the goals and the sources of happiness, not material wealth.

MRR: What do you believe are the political responsibilities of artists? How can music be a force for change, or can it even?
I think artists have one responsibility and that is to be truthful. For some, that means doing work with social and political content. For others, truth will be more personal. Music, literature, and art are all powerful ways to create change. We help people see things in different ways, we can voice what others can't put into words or may not feel comfortable saying. Music can provoke conversation, help people form bonds and alliances, invite people to work together and provide opportunities for fundraising as well as raising awareness.

MRR: You have such a great sense of style! How you make outfits? Do you draw inspiration from anywhere?
I'm sitting on a plane right now wearing pants that I've worn nearly every day for a week and a half, a dirty thermal top and a sweater, I feel the opposite of stylish! On days when I can take time to create an outfit, I find it a fun way to express how I'm feeling. I've always enjoyed playing dress up but I don't always have time for it. When I lived in the Arizona desert, I used to sew and make my own clothes. I think sometimes I looked less fashionable and more like a kooky artist but that's ok with me.

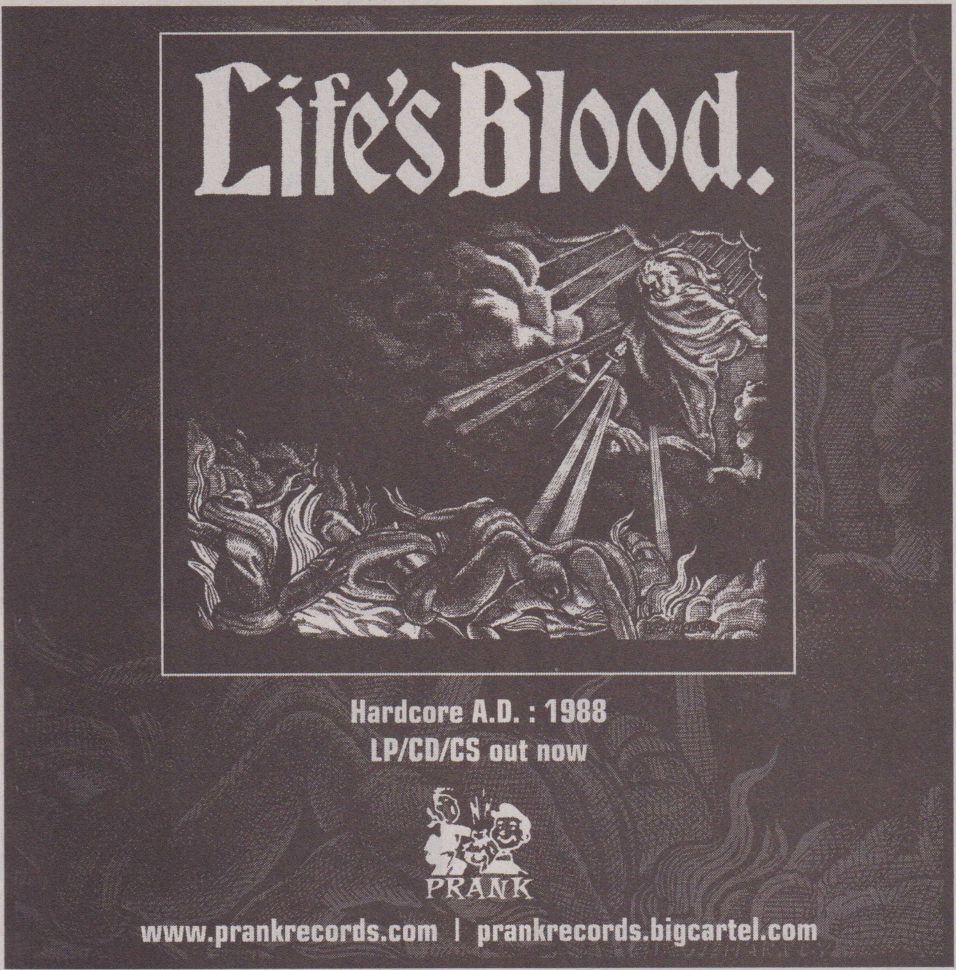
MRR: Who are your heroes, musical and otherwise? Are there any musicians or writers you think are criminally underrated?
I grew up listening to soul music, so I admire the work of Bessie Smith, Aretha Franklin, and Etta James to name just a few. In later years I got into glam so Bowie and Elton John are both heroes. Patti Smith is in there, too. My early roots are in Ranchera music and Mexican pop, and the songs of Jose Alfredo Jimenez and Armando Manzanero still speak to me.

I think June Millington is criminally underrated. She is a huge inspiration to me. She was born in the Philippines to an American dad and a Filipina mother. June is a woman of color who starting playing electric guitar when her family moved to California. She formed an all female rock band called the Svelts with her kid sister Jean and after several years of touring, she formed the band, Fanny. Fanny would become the first all female rock band to release an LP on a major label. Their band rocked! They were tight, proficient musicians but they were ahead of their time and they never received the recognition they deserved. Every woman who plays rock today should know that it was June Millington who held the door open for us many years ago.

MRR: What projects are you currently working on and what do you have planned for the future?
I recently recorded some songs at my bass player's home studio with my band, The Sissy Bears. I think we're going to put that out as a single out on the Don Giovanni label. I also recorded a song with my comadre, Martin Sorrondeguy for a project we do together called the Shhh. Martin and I are are collaborating with L.A. electro punX, Future Shoxxx on a song I wrote called "Cell Phone."

Alice Bag recently completed fundraising for her second LP.

Stay up to date at alicebag.com.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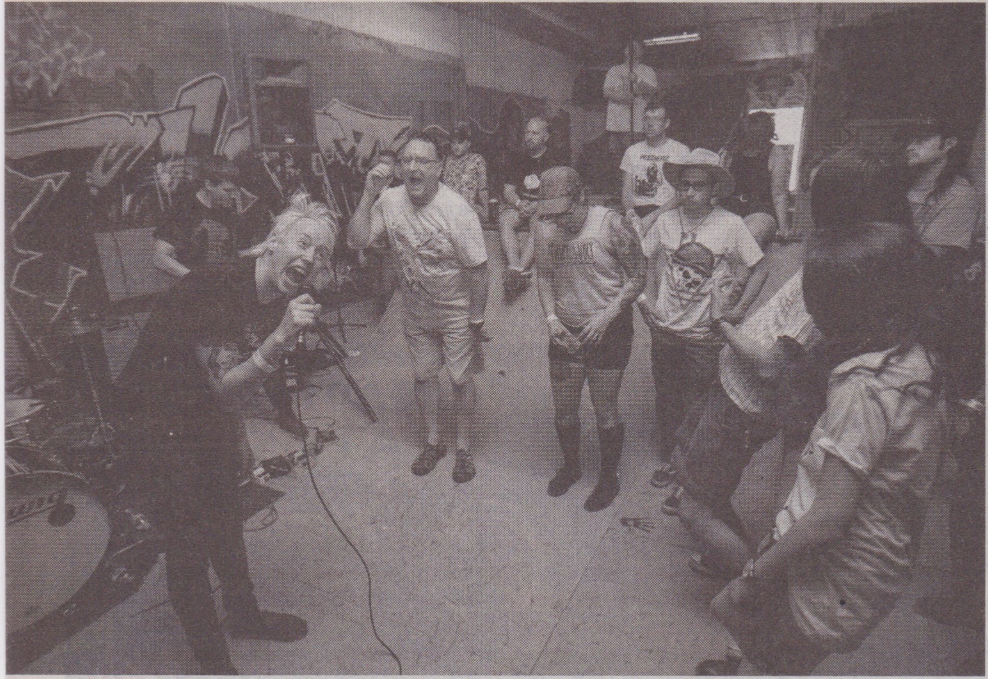

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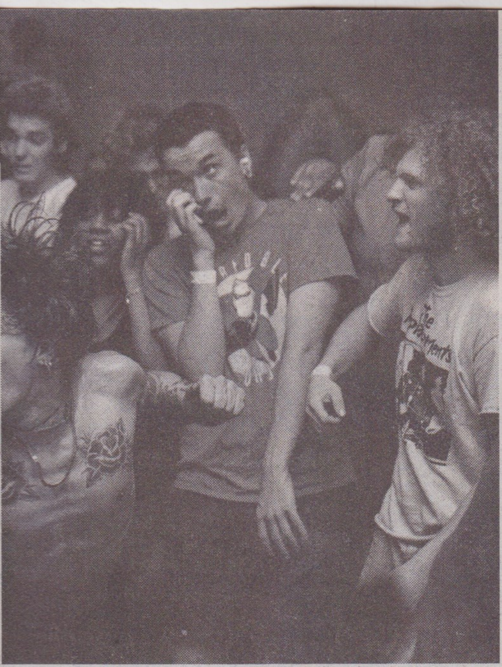
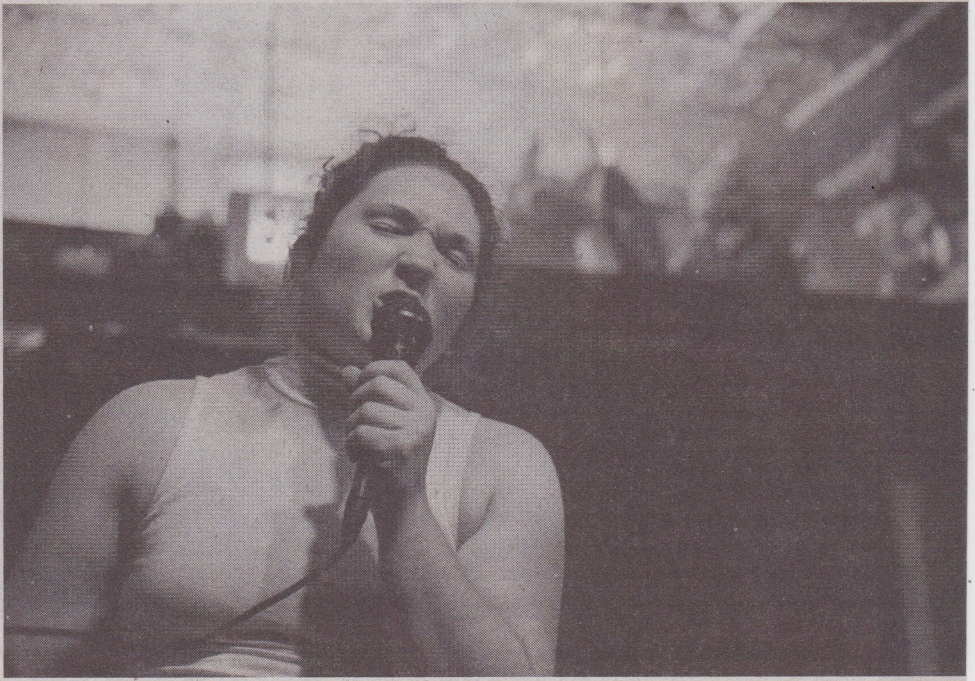




DUMB FE5T

ALL PHOTOS BY VERONICA MULLEN

TOP: STATUES OF THE DEAD, BLEEDING GUMS, THE WAD

MIDDLE: THE STRANGER, DREAM PROBE, SPELL BREAKER

BOTTOM: 86 GEMINI, PRYSS

NO U TURN

Punk in East and Southeast Asia has a long tradition, beginning with the late ’70s, when the first bands in Japan started to play. Nearly at the same time the first bands in the Philippines were formed. Most countries in the region had their own punk bands in the 1980s. In Myanmar / Burma, though, everything seems to start in the 1990s, when the country was more like the dystopia in Orwell’s 1984 then anything else. The nation was isolated and some people argue that sailors from UK brought punk rock to Yangon. Who knows?! In the year 2000 Luk Haas from France released a split seven-inch with the indie rock / punk bands The Ants and Ghost Rider. When I visited the country for the first time in 2006, I recognized some people selling buttons from Adicts, G.B.H., Sex Pistols and the Berlin punks Scattergun in the streets. Sadly, I did not have any time to chat to the people and ask about them. Later, I failed to follow up. It was in the years of weak internet connections, in rural areas in Western Germany as well as in Yangon, I guess.

Punk in Myanmar got more attention in Germany starting in 2011. Mandy Fox did a podcast for the German radio SWR2 about the punk band Big Bag, titled “Small Escapes and Big Lies” (“Kleine Fluchten und große Lügen”). In the following years documentaries were releasEaiddhi: Yangon Calling in 2013, Myanmar goes Democrazy in 2014, and My Buddha is Punk in 2015. They came to the cinemas and movie festivals in the Global North, and were covered on German television and in magazines and newspapers. Nearly all media wanted to show pictures of punks with Mohawks flipping off the generals. Journalists—mainly white people from the US or Middle Europe—took these pictures and put them in a context of London in the middle / late ’70s, only under tropical palm trees.

At the heart of these reports are often the street punks in Yangon, especially the sympathetic guys from the anarcho punk band the Rebel Riot. Most of the journalists failed to focus on the political content—like Food not Bombs or the spreading of anarchist thoughts in the country—but instead wrote about the look of these punks. Military regime vs. Punks was the theme around the article. Other bands in Yangon didn’t get the same attention, in some part because they do not look like punk clichés.

When I was in the country in 2016, I met with guitarist and *vocalist Ye Ngwe Soe of the band No U Turn. We had some beers and talked about music, punk rock, building a scene, and the life in Yangon. He mentioned a lot that is similar to issues in other Asian or European countries: a small scene, only a few activists, and a lack of infrastructure. I remember he told me that you have to pay up to 600 USD to rent a bar in Yangon. This is unbelievable expensive, especially for a country where most of the kids do not have enough money. In May his bandmate and founder of JAM It, Eaiddhi, was in Berlin and we had some chances to chat. That should be enough as introduction for a band you should check out if you like Rancid and melodic punk rock, if you are interested in punks with a message, if you are interested in good and diverse music.*

Interview and introduction by Mika Reckinnen of Alleiner Threat and Trust. *Photos by Matt Grace and Nico Djavanshir. No U Turn is Ye Ngwe Soe (vocals), Eaiddhi (guitar), YarZar (bass) and CK (drums).*

MRR: I read that No U Turn was formed in 2002. That's quite a long time for a punk band! What was your motivation in 2002 to form a band?

YE NGWE SOE: Since I was young, I listened to and learned a lot of different types of music and their histories. "At the beginning I chose punk rock but when punk rock chose me, I couldn't get out of it." The other guys in our band are the same, too. We practiced and played at home and studios. We played in public for a few times before we formed us as No U Turn. Some friends suggested names for our band, but we didn't like any of them. We chose our name on our way back from a swimming pool. Darko from the band Side Effect was being sarcastic and pointed at a "No U Turn" sign.

EAIDDHI: We met at a guitar school and decided to start a band together. In the beginning, we just wanted to be on stage and play. Later on we got more passionate and serious about our music.

MRR: Your newest release is called *Human War*. What is "human war" about? Listening to the CD, I think it contains a lot of influences from different music styles. It is not only punk rock, but is also has moments of ska, alternative rock, and one song has a kind of rap part. What are your international influences nowadays and how much are you influenced by Burmese music, be it traditional or pop music?

YE NGWE SOE: The song "Human War" is about discrimination. I like all genres under punk rock—e.g street punk, pop punk, Oi!, ska punk, celtic punk etc., and I like to sing, too. "Urban Life" was a collaboration song with my other musician friends R Zar Ni and J Me.

EAIDDHI: We have a lot of influences from different punk bands. That is why you can find different styles in our albums. Regarding Ye Ngwe Soe's songwriting, he is influenced by '80s and '90s Burmese artists like Soe Lwin Lwin and Ba Din.

MRR: Myanmar has—as far as I observed—a small punk scene nowadays. There are crusty street punk bands like Rebel Riot, Never Reverse, or OAF. There are indie punk bands like Side Effect, Big Bag, or the Ants (by the way, are they still around?), and a punk rock band like No U Turn. Do you think it is popular in the moment to start bands in Myanmar?

YE NGWE SOE: I think yes, it has been popular to start bands for about the past ten years. But most of them do not live long. Side Effect and Big Bag are still around, but the Ants stopped, because it is very challenging to survive for a long time here. Most of the commercial music productions do not pay attention to alternative music scenes. It is a bit of revolution to show something different from the mainstream. We do not have independent record labels. So far I only met only one independent producer (at 9 Night Record) in this country.

MRR: 9 Night Record is not only releasing your music, but different acts from different music genres, right? Is there a collaboration or support from other bands, who aren't playing punk?

EAIDDHI: Yes, apart from our "Urban Life" song, we did one punk song collaborating with a hip-hop artist named Wareru." The song is called "Dreams of the North / South Pole," and is featured on the JAM IT! compilation album. And sometimes, we perform the song "Thank You So Much" by the female hip-hop group Y.A.K with them, when we share the same stage. We like bands like Rancid and Transplants and we also like hip-hop. So we like to do collaboration with hip-hop artists.

MRR: Where do you record your songs? How many copies do you produce and how do you sell the music?

EAIDDHI: We have a home studio at Ye Ngwe Soe's place. We normally record the drums at a better studio and record the rest at his place. We normally print 1,000 copies and normally sell from 700 to 1,000. We work through distribution companies, but it is quite difficult for independent artists like us. We had to pay at least 600 USD for distribution and it only last in the market for about two weeks. Then they are gone, because most of the music shops are at shopping centers and the individual shops are slowly dying, because of the high rents. At shopping centers, they do not have a lot of space to display. So they would rather display top hit albums and artists than artists like us. So it is not worth to pay that much money to display for just two weeks. That is why we started JAM IT!. We try to sell our albums and any artists like us can sell at our gigs. And there is a bar called the Rough Cut. They support artists like us and they have a small corner selling albums from JAM IT!, Y.A.K and Kultureshock.

MRR: There was a lot of international attention on Burmese Punk a few years ago, e.g. with the DVD Yangon Calling and several article in newspapers all over the world. Did this help your band to get more attention? Or was it a risk for you?

YE NGWE SOE: *Yangon Calling* is like a spark and got a lot of international attention. For No U Turn, we get more interviews, but not too many shows and we did not have more local fans. The risk was not only for me, it was for everyone who is in it.

EAIDDHI: There were more interviews from journalists and most of them did not really care about our music. It did not really change us, because local people do not know all those articles about us and do not really care. We had to build fans ourselves.

MRR: Do you see big differences for punk bands forming themselves in 2017, compared to 2002? What changed?

YE NGWE SOE: Yes, from the past three years until now, there are more punk bands forming in Yangon as well as in other city like Mandalay.

EAIDDHI: I would say it got easier for new bands. There are a lot of home studios and you can even start your own studio, which doesn't cost a lot and is easy to buy. And there are more rehearsal studios. When we started in 2002, it was difficult to reach out to people. We gave away demos to people at concerts or in downtown or at universities. Now you can easily upload your songs on Facebook or YouTube and share them. It is faster now to get attention and fans.

MRR: Some youth activists in Myanmar told me that they see some controversies coming with the older generation. Some of the people now turning 40 or 50 have not heard or learned anything about concepts like human rights or environmental protection. Is this a problem for punks, too?

EAIDDHI: Some older generation maybe would not understand our music and punks, but it is not a problem for us.

MRR: Do you get support by your families and friends?

EAIDDHI: My dad was a songwriter. So since I was young, he supported me. He sent me to piano class when I was eight years old and then to guitar class. I always love to spend time in the studio. So after I finished my high school, he sent me to a recording studio to learn. And he also encouraged me to whatever I like, even though it is not exactly the same thing as he was doing. And of course, all my friends are supporting us.

MRR: Your lyrics are in Burmese. But I found some translations of the song titles. What are your lyrics about?

YE NGWE SOE: Most of my lyrics are about what is happening around us, my own view and feelings about things. It can be something about way of life, motivation, street culture, music revolution and freedom.

MRR: One song on the *Human War* CD is called "There are Arrests." What is this song about?

YE NGWE SOE: It is about drug use and arresting young people who use or hold drugs and putting them in the jail. And this is the law? Instead of creating proper rehab centers and eliminating the production of chemical drugs?

MRR: An important point! Do you follow up with the situation in the Philippines, where potential drug users and pushers are killed by the government? Does it have an influence on the discussion in Myanmar?

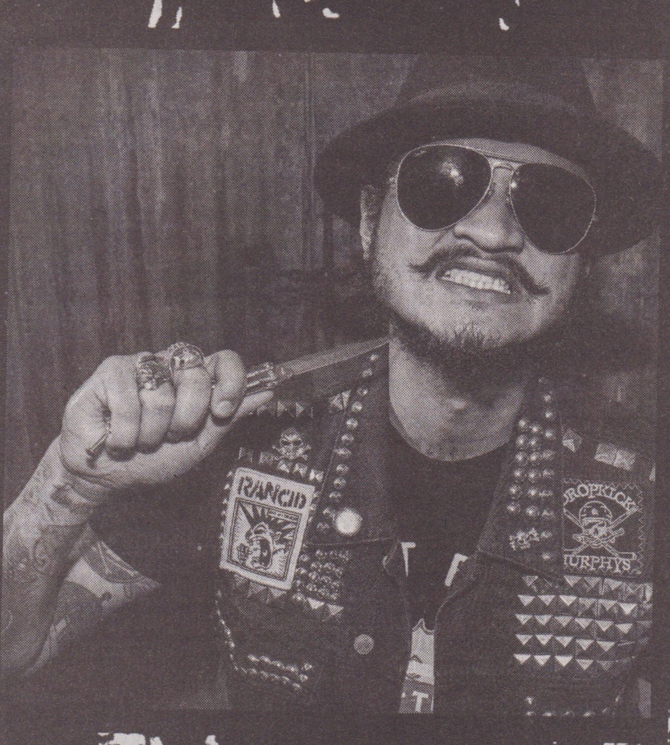
EAIDDHI: It is all over on the internet, so we saw it for sure. But in Myanmar, drugs have been a big issue. There are people growing poppies and producing opium, heroin, and meth in the country. A lot of young people are into it and punished seriously. One of my friends got arrested with a joint of weed and he spent six years in jail. For a user, depending on the amount, you go to prison from five to fifteen years. It is not as bad as in Philippines, because police are not murdering them. But it affects the young people who lose their life after spending so much time in prison. There are no proper rehab centers.

MRR: When I was in Yangon I read an article about increasing alcoholism in the society. Is this also an issue for you?

EAIDDHI: It is not really a big issue. Alcoholics are everywhere, not even punks. But the difference thing is punks here are not like punks in Germany or Europe. I have seen them often in Germany. They have no jobs, begging and drunk. Most of the punks here, they are teenagers. In our culture, parents are very supportive. Some of them are still at the universities and some have jobs. I have never seen a punk begging in the streets of Yangon.

MRR: Ye Ngwe Soe, when we met in Yangon, you mentioned that censorship is not a huge problem for a band like No U Turn. On the other hand I heard, some bands and activists are still struggling with it. How does the different view come?

YE NGWE SOE: Well...this is a bit of a boring question to be honest. I do not have any specific view on it. We grew up with this censorship problems around us and we were somehow...we have not been rejected apart from one song called "Car Cassette" in



2009. We had to change some specific lyrics, which said "turn the radio off." They thought we were against the government radio. I did not change the lyrics and in 2016 that song was allowed to be released.

EAIDDHI: Actually, one of my songs was banned by the censorship department when we were releasing our first album in 2009. The song is about homeless kids who were abandoned by their parents. But the censorship department said we could not write bad stuff about the parents, because in our culture we should respect our parents. And in 2011, I used a word ("suicide") that they forced me to change. After they lifted up censorship, we didn't have any more problems, but there is still censorship for films and other media.

MRR: The political system in Myanmar changed a lot between 2002 to 2017. Do you feel more freedom to play, record and exist as a punk band?

YE NGWE SOE: Yes, a bit more freedom and access to information, but no support for punk rock and alternative music scene. No producers, no sponsors, and we are still a very small society. But some of us are still enjoying our lifestyle and I still do not think about changing to mainstream for commercial reasons.

EAIDDHI: Before the change, it was actually illegal to play songs on stage that have not checked by the censorship department. But they did not really pay too much attention and people were scared to play political songs in public. Before, even at the studios they had a sign that says "political songs are not allowed to be recorded here," because they did not want to have problems with the government. Now, everyone sings freely and talks openly about politics.

MRR: How is it for a punk band in Myanmar to find places to play? Are there independent clubs or bars where you can easily play?

EAIDDHI: There are a lot of restaurants with stages but they are only for cover bands and girls dressed up and doing karaoke. Out of many new bars, there are a few bars that have live bands. The problem is, they are so expensive, so it is difficult for local crowds to come. Most of the bars are meant for foreigners.

MRR: How often do you play shows?

EAIDDHI: In 2016, we played fifteen concerts. We have never played that many gigs before, actually.

MRR: You are the founder of JAM IT! What is JAM IT and what are you doing there?

EAIDDHI: We started in 2012 because of those problems with the lack of space to perform. The idea is to create a music scene and create a platform for new young artists and bands like us. We organize a series of small live concerts with different artists.

MRR: I saw that also graffiti and hip-hop artists are part of JAM IT! How does it work to bring different arts and artists together?

EAIDDHI: We are friends with the graffiti artists already and we wanted to work together so that we are not just supporting the music scene but also the subculture of Yangon. It is important that we all work together and support each other to develop the scene.

MRR: How is the crowd? How is the scene in Yangon? In other cities?

EAIDDHI: We started with acoustic guitars in a public park with four bands playing in front of twenty people and now depending on the venue and events, we have hundreds of people coming to JAM IT! Every time we have different genre so you can see punk fans, hip-hop fans, and metal fans all mixing together. We are connected with some bands from Mandalay, but they are not specifically punk.

MRR: What are your future plans?

EAIDDHI: We will occasionally do JAM IT! whenever we have a chance. We are planning a four years celebration of JAM IT! in Yangon and another one in Taung Ngu City, which is in the Magwe division. As for No U Turn, Ye Ngwe Soe is writing and recording demos for our next album.

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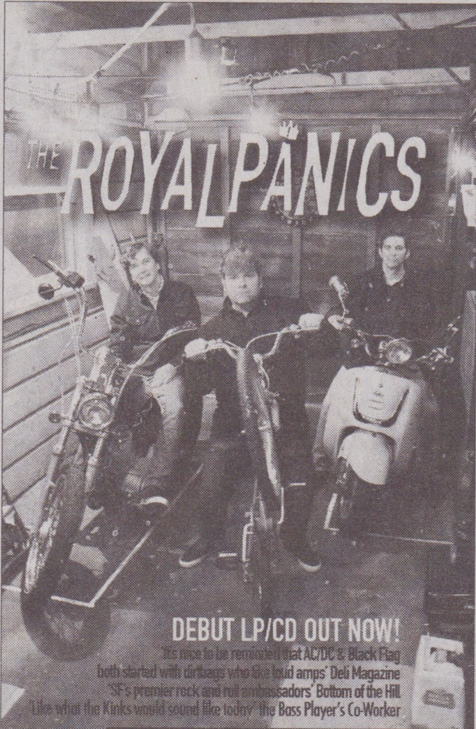

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FATIGUE

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A few years ago, all that San Francisco had to offer was no-hoper dad punk bands for tattooed ad execs that got a babysitter for the night, or bald mods that ripped off Wire but would still get drunk and beat you up. Thankfully, old age eventually took its toll on that scene, and out of the ashes emerged Fatigue to a ready and waiting audience of nü skins, Samba shufflers, and Nordstrom Rack™ Perry boys.

Interview by Allan McNaughton, who threw in a couple of questions that Bruce Roehrs asked Agnostic Front in 2010 for good measure. If Bruce was still around, Fatigue is definitely a band he would support.

Photos provided by Chris Bavaria and Angela Owens.

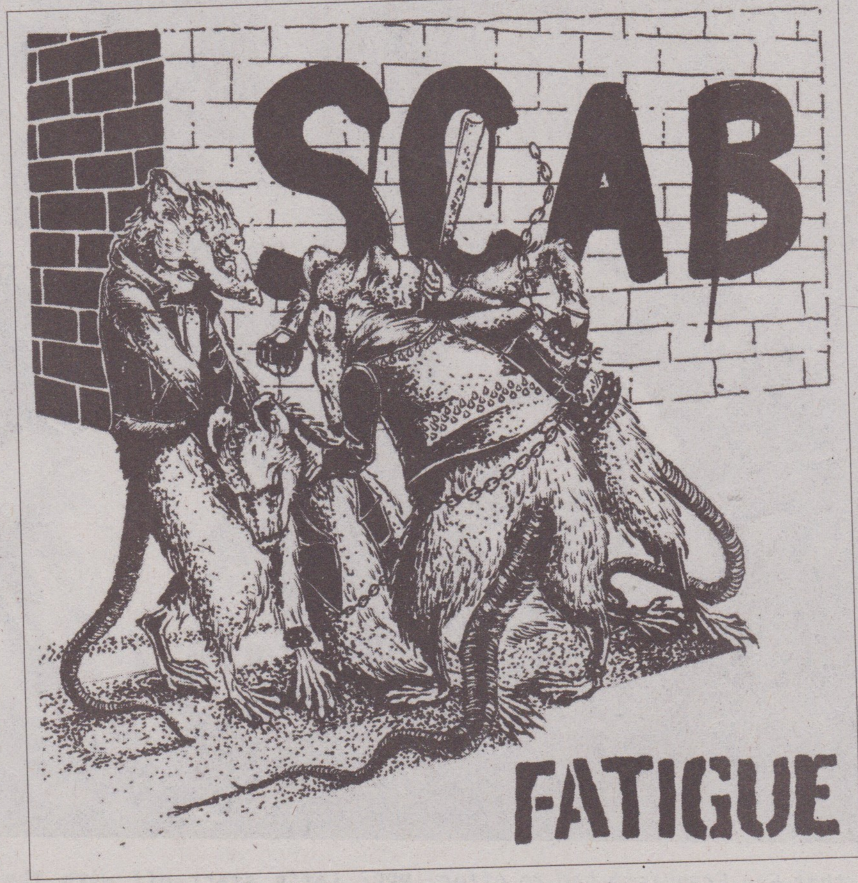
MRR: Let's start off with the basics, who is in the band, what do they play, and what's their hometown?
Carl Cordova: Good question. I'll start off with myself; I sing in the band, I'm originally from San Diego California.

MRR: How old are you Carl?
Carl: 39.
Isaac Starr: Damn Daniel! I'm 35, I play the drums, and I'm from Modesto California. We've got two SF natives in the band; Beau Adams plays guitar, he's from San Francisco, he's, what, 38? Max Wickham is 28, he's from San Francisco, he plays bass.

MRR: He's the baby.
Carl He is the baby.

Isaac And lastly Ben Hjelmstad, what's he, 26?
Carl I think he's 26 or 27. He was the youngest in the band before he had to quit because he had a kid.

MRR: So he's officially not in the band anymore?
Isaac: I'm not gonna say we won't play with him again…we've been talking about going to Chicago, A: because we want to play out of town and B: because it would be fun to play another show with him.
Carl: He's definitely an important part of the band, he was on all the recordings and helped write the songs, but unfortunately he's not gonna be able to play live with us for most of the shows, and probably any recordings going forward.



MRR: So what was the impetus for starting Fatigue? Whose idea was it, and did you have a sound in mind when you started the band?
Isaac: I guess it was basically me and Carl just hanging out and nerding out about records a lot, and I started getting a lot more into the New York sound of hardcore, and wanted to do something influenced by Last Rites, Life's Blood…mid-tempo, New York style hardcore with a nod to the UK.

MRR: Does the band still match up to what you originally thought you wanted to do?
Carl: A little bit. I think it actually ended up being a lot more hardcore than we'd originally planned, which is not a bad thing. I think Isaac's newfound excitement for American hardcore and my appreciation for a bunch of English bands that he introduced me to led us to want to combine those two. At the very start we were both geeking out about Criminal Damage and how fun it would be to start a band like that. Of course it didn't end up sounding anything like that.

MRR: I hear the word "Oi!" get thrown around when people talk about your band in terms of "Oi!-influenced hardcore" or whatever, when it just sounds like hardcore punk to me. There's a tendency for a band with a bald singer playing mid-paced hardcore instead of playing 100mph, all of a sudden they're "Oi!-influenced," or Oi!…
Isaac: That's a very good point. And I would say yes.
Carl: Most definitely. I think that's a very popular look and sound right now, I think there's probably a variety of reasons why we get associated with that. Probably partly because I was in an Oi!-influenced band, Sydney Ducks, prior to being in Fatigue. I'm sure part of it was Isaac being in a band called Guilty Party; you should look 'em up. Classic Modesto Oi!
Isaac: I wouldn't say it has nothing to do with how some of the people in the band dress.
Carl: Oh yeah, for sure. Ben definitely looks like a skinhead for sure. But we're just a punk band. But we love all that stuff.
Isaac: And we always set out to not be an Oi! band. We didn't want to get pigeonholed into playing garbage-ass shows. We'd rather play with hardcore bands and punk bands.

MRR: Are you saying that Oi! shows are garbage?
Isaac: Pretty much I am saying that.
Carl: I'm not saying that! I will say that good American Oi! bands are few and far between for sure.

MRR: So there's a schism already in the band between punks and skins.
Isaac: At the end of the day we do unite.

MRR: How do you feel about some of these guys like Lars from Rancid, who are trying to unite skins and.punks?
Carl: Good on 'em.

MRR: Carl, you now live in New York, what effect has that had on the band?
Carl: Oh, a huge effect. I think I moved to New York right after we released the first seven-inch. I've been in New York for two years now and since then we've put out two new EPs, so we've been making it work, but it's hard. The last two times I've been back there I've worked with Phil, the engineer who recorded the new EP, to finish up vocals and mixing. It's a slow process but we're getting it done.

MRR: Obviously touring and playing gigs is difficult, living in different coasts, but you did manage to

do a short East Coast jaunt in 2016.

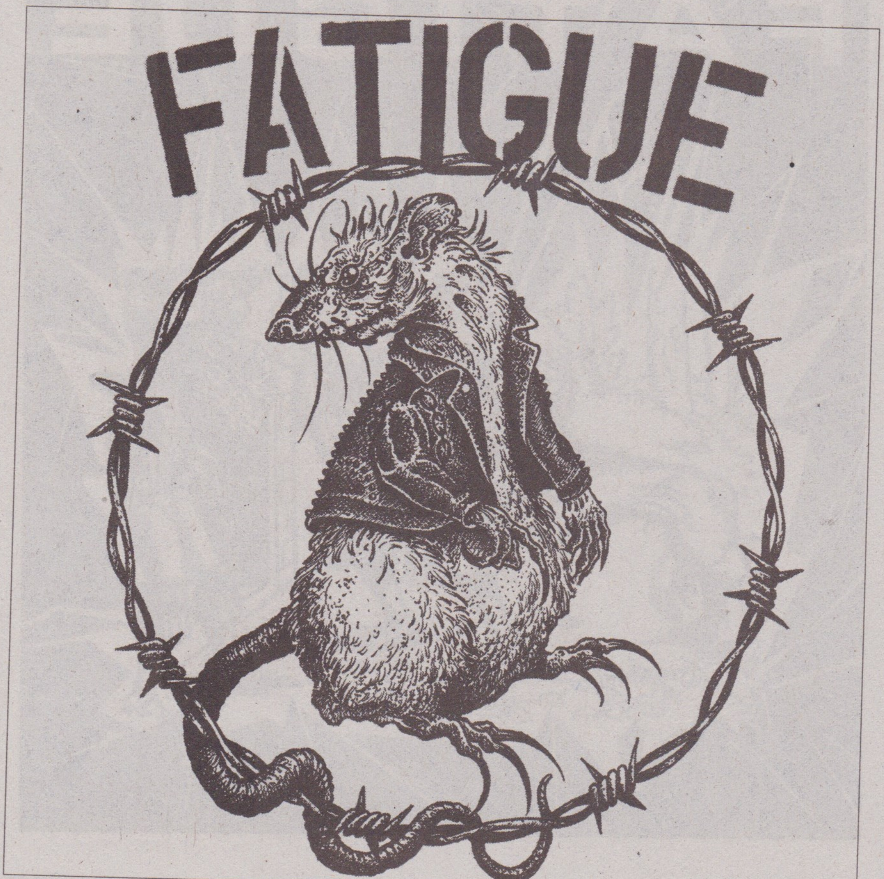
Carl: Oh man, that was a great trip, definitely helped reinvigorate my excitement in the band.

Isaac: The only low points were a couple of poor turnouts for shows, but it was the most fun I've had on tour ever.

MRR: How wild does it get on the road? You guys are veterans, you're a little more seasoned, so there's probably not as much alcohol and groupies…

Carl: There's a lot of sleeping, I would say. That's the one thing that Max does on tour. He sleeps the whole time.

Isaac: He sleeps so much. The rest of us would have been up for an hour, had coffee, eaten breakfast, and packed the van, then be like, "Alright Max, its time to go" and he'd wake up in a frantic, like, *The Hangover*, just "huhhhh?" launching out of bed, his shit's everywhere.



MRR: But it all comes out on stage. He's rested up; he's got all that energy

Carl: I think he has an iron deficiency. He needs to go the doctor.

MRR: He's not a vegetarian is he?

Carl: I don't think so.

Isaac: But he'd also launch out of bed then get in the van and just fall asleep.

Carl: He's also a horrible driver just to go on record. I'm sure his other bands are aware.

MRR: Well he grew up in San Francisco. How many good drivers do you know from San Francisco?

Isaac: We let him drive for five minutes the entire tour.

Carl: Yeah we let him drive for five minutes in Toronto, never again.

MRR: So far all the records and t-shirts have had a pretty distinctive look, despite being made by a few different artists. Art direction is not a very punk phrase, but art direction is clearly important to you guys…who have you worked with, and why?

Isaac: It's always been a big thing for both Carl and I, we've handled dealing with the artists exclusively. The other guys trust us, but aesthetics were always an important thing for us to lock down. Carl's history of nerding out with graphics and stuff, he had a pretty good encyclopedia for us to pull from, so basically I would have some ideas and have some artists draw them up and bounce them off Carl to talk about how we could make them more punk. Some of the artists we've worked with weren't necessarily punk people, but just killer at what they did anyway.

Carl: The main artist for Fatigue I would say is—

Isaac: Gustavo Martinez, the original bass player for Peligro Social. He definitely knew when we referenced UK82 punk art, it came through pretty easy. He did the first EP, the cover for the new EP, and two t-shirts for us. Another artist we worked with was Phil Guy, also known as Burrito Breath, who I met through social media and used to live in San Francisco. He and I used to trade artwork and he's a really good illustrator and cartoonist. We thought of him when we wanted to do a French Oi!-inspired t-shirt. What's the name of that artist? Alteau?

Carl: Definitely a nod to Alteau and kind of the Templars artwork. We did a t-shirt that was kind of a "punks and skins unite" and he also did the EP cover of the demo, that was influenced by Alteau and also Limonius, an old Jamaican dude that did a bunch of reggae art in the '70s and '80s, and all of it's phenomenal.

MRR: Knowing that you guys are both into records, what's been your best score, what are your Holy Grail records, and what record turned you on to punk?

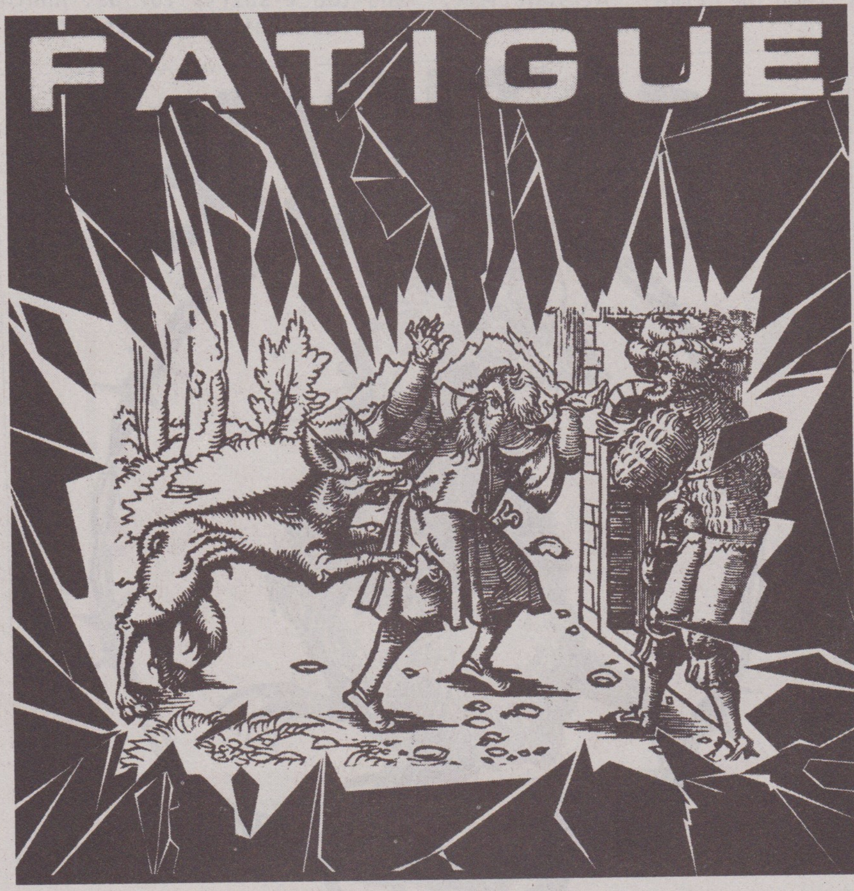
Isaac That's my cue…the record that turned me on to punk, I don't remember the title, but it's the Weird Al Yankovic record with the Nirvana cover. (Off The Deep End—*Ed.*)

MRR: That's the first time you heard alternative music.

Isaac: That's the first time I heard secular, alternative music, and decided I was into aggressive music. So I'd like to give a shout out to Weird Al.

Carl: Craigums will appreciate that. I would say that it's probably the Minor Threat discography CD. That's the first time I heard what could be considered punk rock. When I heard it I didn't understand it at all. I was coming from bands like maybe Dinosaur Jr. I was really into Primus…whatever was popular with alternative kids at the time. Someone played me Minor Threat and it just blew my mind. So I would say that's the first time I heard actual aggressive music. And Minor Threat is still my favorite band to this day.
Isaac: I think the first actual punk…

MRR: You can't go back and change it now!
Isaac: No, Weird Al definitely started me on the road. But the first tape of a punk album, when I was in Christian school, this kid handed me a tape that had the first two Rancid records and Op Ivy on it, I think that was the first actual, non-Christian music…at the time I was really sheltered and was not allowed to listen to non-Christian music so that was the first secular record I had that I would listen to quietly and hope my parents wouldn't hear when they would use swear words.



MRR: It all comes back to Rancid again.
Isaac: I mean, the Last Resort, that was my first punk record.

MRR: And you bought it new when it first came out. Went down the record shop and paid 98p.
Isaac: And went and listened to it on the pitch.

MRR: On the terraces. OK, so your best record score?
Isaac: That would be a Carl question, he's the one with the really expensive record collection.

MRR: A score's not about it being expensive, a score's about it being a great find.
Carl: Probably the best find I've ever had, I found the Minor Threat *Out Of Step* EP on red vinyl with no jacket for 50 cents in Santa Cruz at Streetlight. That's ridiculous. It was in really good condition.

MRR: Is there a holy grail that's out there that you're looking for? Maybe someone that's reading this interview will have a spare?
Carl: I'm still looking for a Last Rites EP.

MRR: I've got five.
Carl: I could use the first Agnostic Front seven-inch with the skinhead labels. I'm willing to trade an Antidote 7" for that. Those are my holy grails at the moment.
Isaac: I honestly can't think of anything right now. I've been taking a bit of a break from vinyl. I've been spending money on Harley parts, not records, for the last couple of years.

MRR: How does Harley feel about that?
Isaac: Oh dear
Carl: That is a bad joke.

MRR: What do you expect? I'm 50 years old.
Isaac: Dad jokes over here. *Back With A Bang.* Just kidding, scratch that.
Carl: Yeah, let's not put that in there.

MRR: Well since Isaac brought up politics…Do you guys vote? Do you bother with that? I still vote. I vote for the lesser of the evils. If I see a guy who's extremely conservative, who's gonna take away some of my rights, I vote for the other guy.
Isaac: You can't vote.

MRR: Do you guys vote?
Isaac: Yes.
Carl: Yeah, of course. I think voting's important. Unfortunately in this past election I felt like our choices were pretty bad. Obviously there was one that was much less evil…I don't even know if I would consider Hilary Clinton evil, but I have huge problems with her. But of course I voted for her over Donald Trump, it was a no contest situation.
MRR: Here we are and Trump won, how's that going to influence Fatigue over the next four years? Or is it?
Isaac: Well from the beginning, lyrics-wise, we've always written stuff that was, not necessarily anti-Republican, but anti-gentrification and modern

day society. But I would think it would be an easy transition to writing about a certain person and his team.
Carl: I mean definitely anti-fascist, but that goes without saying.

MRR: Well, you said it goes without saying, and I wish it did…unfortunately we're in an era where you can't always tell where a band's coming from just because they're in the same scene or they seem like they're punks, or they seem like they're down with the same ideas you have. There are a lot of people who are walking the line between actively coming out and saying "we're anti-fascists" or sitting on the fence because they don't want to alienate a certain portion of their audience…

Isaac: Well we can come out right now and definitely state that we are anti-fascist.

MRR: Well Carl did say it. But that's something, like that tongue-in-cheek, "Oh yeah, I like this cos it's sketchy." We all know people like that.
Isaac: We all know people like that, and I think they're corny as fuck
Carl: This has always been something that punk and hardcore has had to deal with. I do feel like there is a line between being apolitical and playing music and not bringing politics into it, I mean that's not how I see punk, punk in itself is political by nature, so I can understand where people are coming from. I don't necessarily agree with them, but the argument can be made that if you're an apolitical band, it doesn't necessarily mean that you're siding with Nazis or fascists. Obviously I can tell you right now we're a pretty left-leaning band, I mean we're from San Francisco, and we're proud of that. It's unfortunate especially now with the political climate, it's not even something you should be joking about.

MRR: There's young kids out there still learning about hardcore and embracing hardcore. How do you feel about hardcore and the way it has changed?
Carl: I don't think it's changed that much, which is a bad thing and a good thing. There's a pretty strict blueprint for hardcore. Especially now it's been split up into so many genres. Style wise and subject matter wise it's pretty conservative, not politically conservative but stylistically.

MRR: It goes through phases though where certain things become more prominent than others. I mean certain periods in the '90s you would go a long time before you heard a D-beat, then that seemed to flow into everyone having a D-beat.
Carl: I would say in the '90s if you were in a D-beat band you wouldn't even associate with hardcore. I don't know how it was where you were from in Scotland but if there was a band playing D-beat in 1995 they probably hung out with the Profane Existence crowd. They wouldn't be at a hardcore show. Those two things were pretty separate. Despite the '90s being pretty experimental for music. I think hardcore is awesome; it's still definitely one of my favorite genres of music. I love playing it, and I like seeing kids get into it.
Isaac: Well this is something that, I think you wouldn't have seen the crowds mingling so much. And one of the biggest changes is, part of the negatives and part of the positives of the changing times and the availability of everything, is just that when we were kids, you were in Cleveland and I was in Modesto, you had to hear about something from a friend, or just go and pull a record in the store and hope that it was good. You could end up going down so many rabbit holes doing that, just hearing about stuff word of mouth, or going to a record store that you had to travel two hours to get to. Whereas now the availability of all this information and people like friends of ours that have made lists and websites that have allowed people to create an encyclopedia of what they should listen to if they're into a certain genre or even if they're just into punk, it does allow those lines to cross and it's not so…like we were talking about Uniform Choice and straightedge in general and how polarizing that subject used to be. Whereas now due to the availability of information...
Carl: You don't have to hang out with a straightedge kid to find out about Uniform Choice. You can just find it on the internet. It does allow you to broaden

your tastes I just wish it would have an influence on the way people play music. You would think with all this access to different genres in punk and hardcore you'd get these bands coming up with new sounds but instead it's almost like this Japanese approach to music where it's this hyper-specific replication.

MRR: An accurate reproduction or historical reenactment

Carl: Right, Isaac and I just didn't have that luxury, neither did you. You'd be influenced by your local punk band or maybe you'd be able to buy a couple of classic Black Flag or Dead Kennedys records and that would be your blueprint. You would take that and try to produce something with only a few influences. I wish there were more bands that were combining more styles but they're just not.

Isaac: To your point about the hyper specific thing, where you're like, we're gonna do Southern Swedish D-beat.

MRR: Yeah, none of that Eastern shit.

Isaac: Yeah, we're going full Malmö style. That's the only style D-beat we wanna play.

MRR: Yeah fuck Stockholm. That weak shit. Pure Malmö.

Isaac: I also don't know if Malmö's in the East or West or what I just threw that out there.

MRR: I don't either. We're not geography teachers.

Carl: Yeah, we're Americans.

MRR: One thing that has evolved or does evolve, is visibility. When we were younger where we grew up it would have been rare and unusual to see women or minorities or transgender people playing in hardcore bands, and that's common now at least around here and that has led to greater diversity in the punk scene so hopefully that has led to hopefully more visibility for not just straight white guys. The other thing that seems to be happening is that with social media and different news channels a band can have a demo and be on, say, *Noisey*, and be the new hip thing, within a few months of starting, even for a hardcore band. Which is almost unheard of.

Carl: The process has become accelerated, where you can be the "it" band in a matter of weeks as opposed to months or years. I mean some of those bands warrant that attention and those accolades, and some of them are just the flavor of the month. But that just comes with the territory of the internet and technology and home recording equipment.

Isaac: That's something that we made an effort not to do, not for the reason of not wanting to be an "it" band—obviously we'd love to play huge shows and be hyped or whatever if that's the case, but from the beginning we just didn't have a lot of time and we'd just get things done at our own pace.

MRR: You've done a lot considering that you're bi-coastal.

Carl: A lot of that has to do with Isaac; he's a pretty motivated individual. He definitely lights a fire under my ass to get things done.

Isaac: But still, it's at our own pace.

Carl: That's one of the amazing things about the internet, that how it's able to inspire a bunch of people who have maybe been marginalized, and you have these people who feel like they don't belong for one reason or another, and they're able to find a community. And that just wasn't possible before, or it was but just on a smaller scale.

Isaac: You were saying that while you were in Cleveland…

Carl: Cincinnati.

MRR: He's not a geography teacher.

Isaac: Cincinnati, OK. You were feeling pretty helpless and like you would just die in this shithole, then someone invited you to a hardcore show and that changed everything.

Carl: Luckily I was fortunate, as cliché as it sounds, hardcore punk changed my life. I was lucky enough to run into some kids who were older than me and they turned me on to some music that changed my outlook and turned me into the person I am, and that's awesome that the internet allows that to happen a lot easier.

MRR: Is there anything I haven't asked that you want to get out there on behalf of Fatigue?

Carl: We have a new EP coming out, it's on Warthog Speak, I want to thank Justin for all the support that he's given us, he's put out basically all our material. The new EP is called *Scab*, it was recorded by Phil…

Isaac: Li'l Smoothie

MRR: Philthy Phil Spector.

Carl: …the old drummer for Sydney Ducks, I want to thank him, and definitely thank Justin. The future of Fatigue? Who knows what's going to happen with the band. I think our goals are to take all the tracks from these EPs and release them as an LP compilation with some additional tracks we have recorded. That would be rad. If anyone from Europe is reading this, hit us up, because we'd love to do a European twelve-inch release and maybe tour Europe.

MRR: Anything else?

Carl: Fuck Donald Trump.

Isaac: See you fucks at the bar!

Fatigue can be found on the streets of San Francisco, or at fatiguesf.bandcamp.com

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FIRST TIMERS

THIS PAGE, TOP TO BOTTOM: WHITELANDS, THE PEOPLE WE LIKE.

THAT PAGE, LEFT TO RIGHT: FIRST TIMERS ORGANIZING CREW, BLOOD MOON, FATBERG, STRONG ARM, MACADAMIA SLUTS, BITCH HUNT.

FOR
DIY
SPACE

First Timers is about getting new faces and voices in bands, and doing something about the lack of diversity in the make-up of the DIY music community. The First Timers criteria were not intended to exclude anyone but to directly address this. The bands as a whole needed to be able to say YES to at least TWO of the below statements.

One or more of us has never played in a band before.

One or more of us identify as one (or more!) of the following: disabled (visible or non-visible), trans*, queer, non-binary, LGBTQIA+, a person of color, a woman.

One or more of us is playing or doing something in this band that they have never played or done before.

First Timers took place on May 6th and 7th at DIY Space for London—twenty-three bands played their first ever shows! From the doom of Blood Moon to the bedroom drama pop of Panic Pocket, every band was brilliant! We saw so many new faces singing songs about things like Rose being a dick for leaving Jack to die, which tube line reminds you of an ex, and how every man in a roll neck jumper is a wanker. I also wanna say how good the crowd were. Everyone was totally into all the bands and created such a supportive atmosphere—some ever wore bootleg merch for their mate's bands!

All this was preceded by a season of workshops on bass, beat boxing, drums, guitar, keyboard, songwriting, sound engineering and vocals. The workshops were really helpful and will hopefully continue later in the year.

We got to witness so many incredible bands, some of which have already started playing more shows and I hope the rest will continue too. If you have the capacity in anyway to organize a festival like this I really recommend it. As well as being super fun it is a positive way to actively encourage diversity (or challenge lack of diversity) in your local punk scene.

Thanks to the First Timers '17 crew: Alex, Anne Marie, Bryony, Charlotte, Eilidh, Emmeline, Katy, Jaca, Joyce, Lucy, Tommy, and Rhyiannd for all your help. Thanks also to the workshop coordinators and volunteers at DIY Space for London who helped make this year's event the best yet!

First Timers will return in 2018, until then if you want any help starting your own first timers event email us at firsttimers@diyspaceforlondon.org—we'd love to help!

Words by Creg, photos by Joyce Smith

DIY SPACE FOR LONDON
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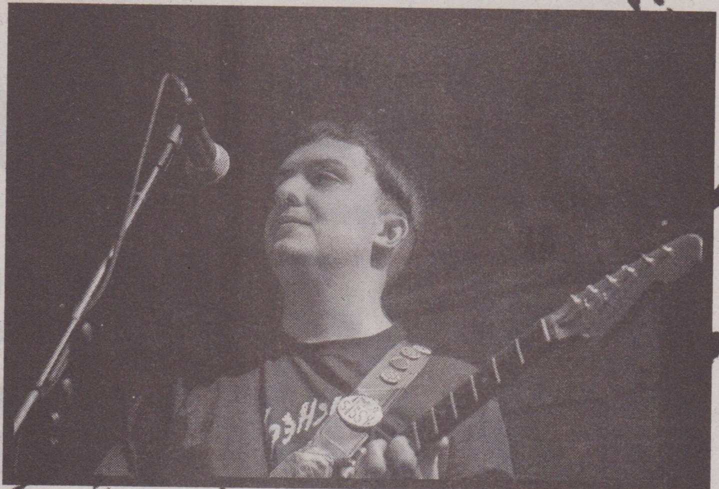
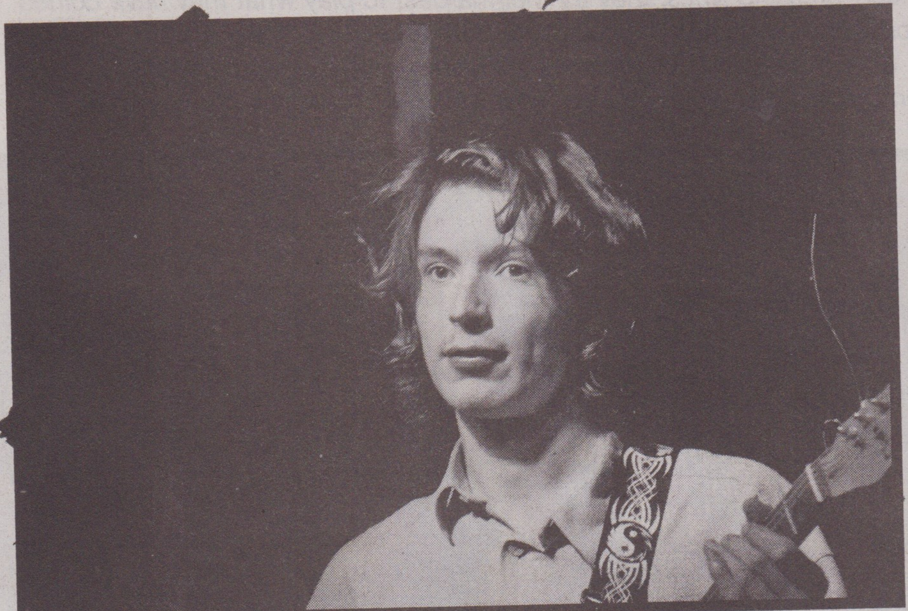




BIG MESS: WARM MUSIC FROM COPENHAGEN

Big Mess is a Copenhagen four-piece with a second album on the way. In spite of taking punk as a point of departure in punk and some intensely heart-breaking lyrics, they try their hardest to play what they have coined "warm music." After playing hardcore for years Tobias and Michael were both ready to kick the rules and form a band defined by openness and warmth. Joined by friends Magnus and Christian they became Big Mess.. A band that aims to be all-encompassing and embracing, and ends up as a patchwork that somehow makes sense.

BIG MESS
TRY TO ENJOY IT

Interview, costumes, and introduction by Anna Sofie Mørch Bendixen. Photos by Alexander Sjöberg.

Tobias: I love hardcore, it's definitely my kind of music. But I wanted to play in a band that was more open, and more song-oriented. I needed an outlet for the songs that I wrote that weren't hardcore songs. And so the idea behind Big Mess was to form a band that could potentially play any song that i wrote. Michael and I knew each other from playing together in Brudte Løfter, and then we invited Magnus and Christian to join us.

Magnus and Christian came from different musical backgrounds, and they had previously played stoner-rock, grindcore, reggaeton, experimental music and what Christian refers to as "hippie-music." The band was designed to be a collaboration, but that objective was less realized on their first album.

Christian: Our first record, *You Know I Care*, is very much Tobias' record. He wrote the songs, presented them to us, and we played them. It was a very straightforward process. I think that's why this album *Try to Enjoy It* is my favorite. Everyone has a voice now.

And everyone having a voice is fundamental. When you ask Big Mess how they want their music to sound, it quickly turns into how they want it to feel. Warm-hearted, open, intimate and honest. The sound of the band is intrinsically woven into the values that they as friends share. And it's hard to sound open, unless you are.

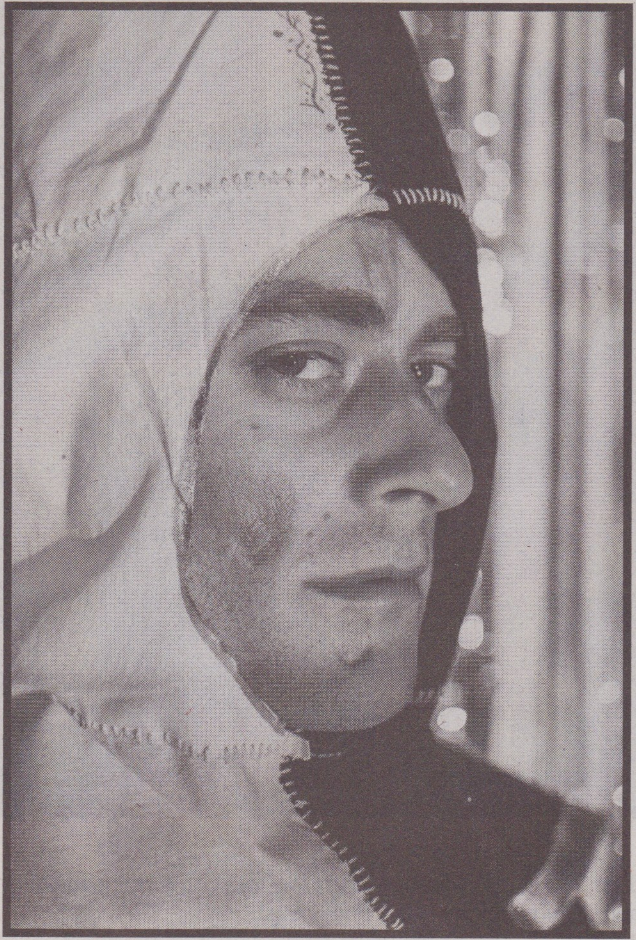
Christian: I didn't know the others very well when I joined the band. I knew Michael from a Danish metal message-board, and I had only met him a couple of times. So I guess I didn't feel that comfortable making suggestions in the beginning.

As the intimacy and openness grew between the members of Big Mess, it was reflected in the music. Take for example the song "2 of U." Tobias wrote it as an ode to his sister, and in its early version it was a very simple and small "I'll Be Your Mirror"-esque song. Christian then introduced the idea of playing a bossa nova drum pattern, and for a while the song existed as a funny little self-contradiction, before it morphed into a full-fledged bossa nova song with a horn-section and all the trimmings. And rid of the ironic aftertaste of simili, the lyrics are now allowed to appear as sincere as they must have felt when written:

When everything's a big mess
Imprisoned in my sickness
I know I can get through
Cause I will still have you
My sister I love you
I wouldn't mind two of you
Who could mind two of you

The idea of warm vs. cold music is something the band keeps returning to. The objective is that a song while sad or tough lyrically, must still somehow instill a feeling of joy in the listener. And according to Big Mess the queens of this discipline are Sleater-Kinney.

Tobias: My biggest inspiration when it comes to playing music is Sleater-Kinney. They have a truly wonderful vibe. Even though many of their lyrics deal with some really tough emotional stuff, the songs are always just really uplifting to listen to. That was my



goal too for Big Mess. To be uplifting even when the lyrics get dark. Even just their way of being in a band, the way they are friends. That's inspiring to me.

An inspiration that the band can all agree on is the Replacements. It's not a direct musical inspiration, but rather an issue of approach. If any band has mastered the art of eclecticism it must be The Replacements. The latest release from Big Mess illustrates this kinship perfectly: A 7" single comprised of a cover of the Abba classic "The Winner Takes is All" and a punkrock banger aptly named "Kill 'Em All".

Michael was the one to suggest the Abba cover. And in the Big Mess iteration, it becomes a song that in spite of itself somehow honors *the idea of "warm music." Maybe what we can hear is the many times Michael has performed the song to his family. Michael comes from a family of Danish folk musicians who as per tradition sing to and with each other when they gather for celebrations and holidays. A favorite is Michael's rendition of "The Winner Takes it All." This is an anecdote he tells with equal parts pride and embarrassment, and when asked to describe the reaction he says that "everyone cries, every time."*

Lyrically the song also lends itself very well to the themes of the forthcoming record.

Tobias: Many people have commented that *You Know I Care* is kind of a concept album. And I agree with that to an extent. The songs are all very much about being in the middle of your twenties and reflecting on your youth and what's to come. But this record, the new one, that's even more of a concept album to me. I fell on my bike two years ago, and suffered a concussion. I was bedridden for almost a year, and in that year my life more or less fell apart. I lost a lot of friends, and my marriage. Moved in with my mom. I wrote the songs on this album during that time. And "The Winner Takes it All" kind of works like a companion piece to the album. The bitterness that comes with feeling like the loser of a given situation.

Michael: It was also very important to us to find a way to play the song where it didn't come off as ironic. We didn't want it to feel like Children of Bodom playing Britney Spears or whatever.

Even though Tobias writes the songs in Big Mess, it's Michael who sings them. And learning how to navigate the insistingly private lyrics happened on a curve.

Michael: In the beginning I felt a little strange singing some of the songs. They were so very much Tobias. His life and his feeling and his perspective. But I guess over time they became less specific and more general, and I guess more universally valid. And I think that's a good thing.

Maybe it also helps that the lyrics, though absolutely heavy, are very funny. In the song "Still S.A.D", Tobias lifts some words from the hip hop classic "Still D.R.E":

> *Since the last time you heard from me I've lost some friends*
> *I'll try my best not to make that happen again*
> *Still crying a ton*
> *Still sorry for all the harm I've done*
> *Heartbroken for all I have lost*
> *But I don't still live with my mom*

There is a sense of a fragile optimism on the record. An acknowledgement of the responsibility to recover from the bad times. It is echoed throughout the record, and perfectly summed up on the track "Montage Feeling" where Michael sings: "Turn off 'Katy Song,' 'Repeater's' just begun." A similar sentiment is also stick-n-poked into Tobias's arm which reads: CRYING BUT STILL PUNK.

And being punk is a point of pride.

Tobias: Being a punk band is important to me. The music is one thing, but it's also just a part of how we operate. The way the band works. I have never not played in a punk band. To me it's about being a part of a network, utilizing the resources that are present in your scene. Taking responsibility for yourself, but more importantly, each other. To me our lyrics are very punk too. It's hard to pinpoint but I guess they are very direct, very non-allegorical. And they have a great sense of righteousness I suppose.

On Try to Enjoy It *Big Mess makes a virtue out of employing the scene that they are a part of. Though the band consists of guitar, bass, drums and vocals, on the record you'll find piano, synthesizer, trumpet, trombone, violin and choir. Less a specific stylistic choice and more serendipitous, depending on who felt like dropping by and participating.*

Michael: Using non-conventional instruments in a punk-context is definitely a kind of trend in Copenhagen right now. I mean, it looks like a trend, but in reality it's just because a lot of exchange happens between different bands and musicians within the scene. There's people who play these instruments that we know, so you want to use that.

Christian: I think a lot of it also has to do with the trend of organising into music collectives instead of just bands. I got connected to Af Med Hovedet (R.I.P.) around 2011 and a lot of them had been into jazz and other stuff before forming more punk rock-ish acts, and suddenly you know all these people playing horns for example, but who are also into punk and what not. So it's an interchange of skills and ideas that has become rather common at the moment, which makes it a lot easier to expand the musical output on a record, and maybe, hopefully, in a live-situation some day.

Tobias: It□s funny because I don□t think people associate our music with a Copenhagen sound at all. Our music is melodic, but we don□t sound anything like Gorilla Angreb or No Hope For the Kids. When Michael and I played in Brudte Løfter we were always referred to as K-Town hardcore, which I take great pride in, but I feel more connected to the Copenhagen scene with this release than I ever have. I think it has a lot to do with how our punk scene has changed in the last ten years or so. When the scene around Mayhem started to become a thing I felt really let down, haha. I just felt like we already had a punk scene and I wanted everyone to support it and not emphasize a divide that did exist. It was also a super closed scene in the early years. And I just remember thinking if I don□t feel welcome here, who would? But over time that scene changed too, became much more open, and I think now I can see how that split ended up being a healthy thing. Now we have a much more plural scene. All these fragmentations, Mayhem, Posh, Af Med Hovedet and the more traditionally □punk□ Ungdomshuset ended up being able to work together and influence each other in an artistically more progressive way. So it hurt, haha, when the scene broke, but I□m happy that it did now.

The last remark almost works as an artist statement for Big Mess: It hurt, and if not completely happy, they certainly are working on getting there. Try to Enjoy It *is out in September via Indisciplinarian.*

bigmessdk.bandcamp.com

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Photos by Iinaroosa Viitanen

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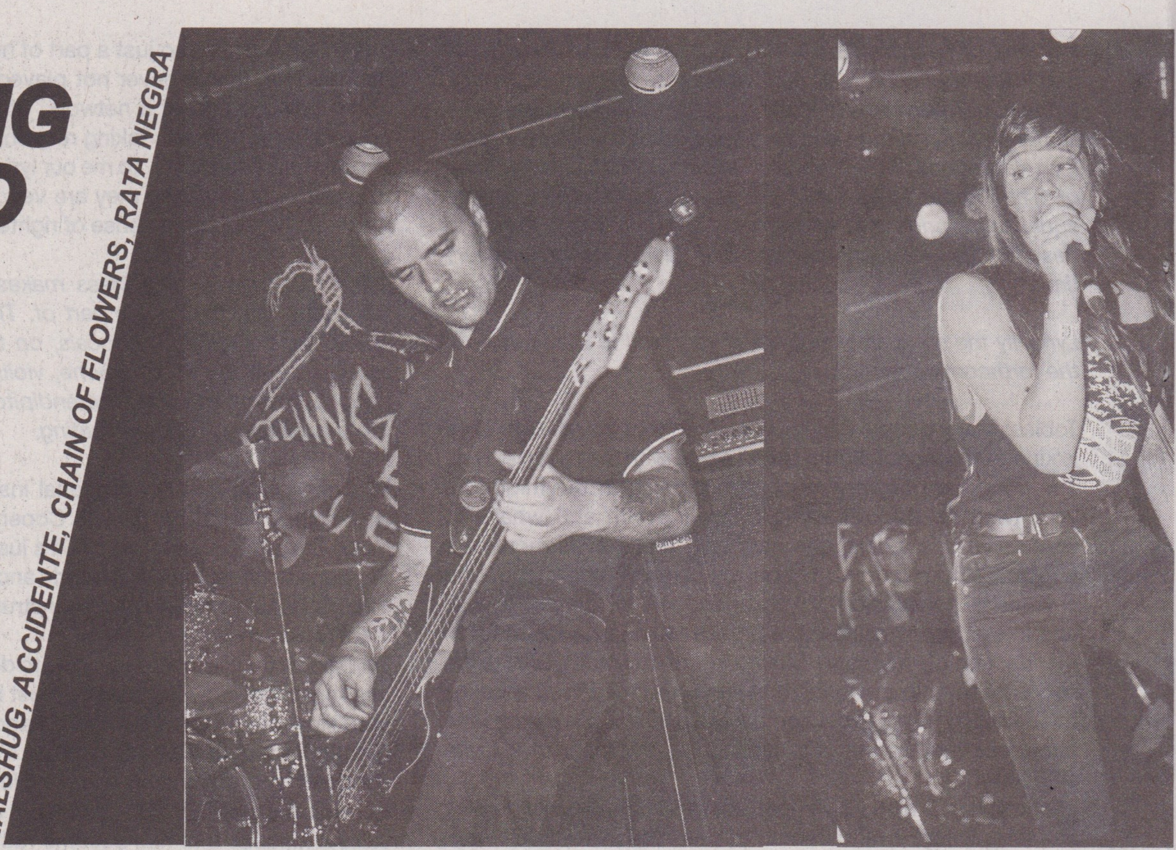

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RHANY TORRES OF THE LOST BOYS AND ETHNIC FACES

Rhany Torres is a well-known bassist and producer, and a supporter of the Filipino underground music scene. Before Rhany started producing albums for record labels, he was the lead vocalist and guitarist of the early '80s pioneering Philippine ska / punk band the Lost Boys and also played bass for Ethnic Faces, one of the first new wave bands in the Philippines. Both the Lost Boys and Ethnic Faces were very influential and were among the new bands that performed at the Brave New World (BNW) events in the early '80s.

The Brave New World events were held at the Philippine Trade Exhibit grounds in Manila. The events were organized by Tommy Tanchanco, the guitar player of Pinoy punk band Third World Chaos / Chaos and most well known as the owner of Twisted Red Cross (TRC) cassette tape label in the Philippines. The Brave New World events introduced new bands that played original punk, hardcore, mod, rockabilly, and new wave songs. These young bands were encouraged to write their own material so they could perform at the BNW events. Some of the songs from these bands were included in TRC's cassette tape compilation series Rescue Ladders *and* Human Barricades*. The Brave New World gigs and TRC's compilation releases were very ground breaking and helped shaped the origins of the Pinoy punk movement that exploded in the early '80s in the heart of Metro Manila.*

Interview and introduction by Jesus Perez Gonzales. Photos provided by the band.

MRR: First off, thank you / Maraming Salamat, Rhany for giving me this opportunity to interview you about your bands the Lost Boys and Ethnic Faces.

Thanks for this interview. The BNW era in Pinoy Rock history hasn't been thoroughly documented in my opinion since it started as an underground movement, apart from the legit music Pinoy music / recording industry so there's much to tell.

MRR: What was your introduction to punk, ska and new wave music? Who was the person that introduced you to this new music? Do you remember the first rock show you went to in the Philippines? Who were the bands (local and foreign) that influenced you to start a band?

DZRJ and Howlin' Dave (a.k.a. Dante David, RIP). I believe he was the sole person responsible for introducing punk and new wave to Pinoys via the radio station. I remember saying to myself, "this music rocks, sounds heavy but where are the long guitar adlibs and drum solos?" I don't remember the first local rock gig I went to but Eric Clapton's 1979 gig at the Araneta Coliseum was the first foreign artist's concert I attended. Punk and new wave music was already airing on RJ then and had influenced some of our local acts. As a matter of fact, Sampaguita who was Clapton's front act played some songs which were, to me, punk and new wave influenced. I formed my first band, Strange Brew when I was in my third year of high school and my influences were varied, punk and new wave included.

MRR: As for The Lost Boys, can you tell us how the band was formed? Who were the original members? Why did you guys choose the name the Lost Boys as the band name?

The band was formed in 1979 or 1980 when DZRJ began sponsoring recordings of original band compositions. The songs by the Jerks and Chaos were already airing so I thought of composing songs for submission. Our three-song demo was approved and we recorded "Criz Craze," "Silly Questions" and "Sheer Damnation" at Studio Z in Valle Verde with the late Jim Sarthou (of Aunt Irma) as recording engineer. I grew up on Disney so I didn't have a hard time thinking of the name, Lost Boys—named after Peter Pan's orphan friends.

MRR: The style of music of The Lost Boys is ska. What inspired you to form a ska band in the Philippines?

Two-tone Ska (and some Toots and the Maytals) were airing on RJ then. They sounded different to me plus I loved the infectious dancey groove so I just tried to write some tunes, approximated how the bands played their music and just played. I believe Lost Boys' "Silly Questions" is the first OPM Ska tune recorded. Dolphy and Panchito recorded two ska tunes around 1968-69 but they're just Tagalog adaptations of foreign songs. By the way, Lost Boys didn't play Ska strictly.

MRR: Did any of your songs have radio airplay on RJAM and WXB102?

The three Lost Boys songs aired on DZRJ. We have one home recording which also aired on RJ, "The Sky is Falling," also an original composition.

Growing up in the Philippines, radio stations DZRJ AM ("the rock of Manila") and WXB102 FM ("the station that dared to be different") were the stations that introduced me to Pinoy rock, folk, rock, punk, hardcore, ska, reggae, rockabilly, and new wave music. On WXB102, they had a weeknight show called "Capital Radio" which was hosted by Cool Carla. The Capital Radio show played punk rock songs from local and foreign bands, announced calendar of events of new wave / punk parties and concerts, and sometimes would have band members of Pinoy punk bands as guests in the studio.

MRR: Can you tell us how the band Ethnic Faces was formed? Who wrote the song Within Tribes? Where did you guys record the songs, what recording studio?

Some of us (Ocean Zoo, Lost Boys members) were grade school batch mates and lived in the same neighborhood so we kind of knew each other early on. Lost Boys was planning to join a punk band contest on TV, "Ito Yun, Ang Galing," when I learned that Jack and friends (Ocean Zoo) also wanted to audition. Since we didn't want to compete with each other, we decided to form Ethnic Faces for the contest and disband both Lost Boys and Ocean Zoo. The lyrics and melody of "Within Tribes" was written by Jack Sikat and the music / arrangement was by the band. We recorded two versions of the song, both at Studio Z.

[*Ed. note: The grand prize of the contest was P10,000 pesos. The winner of the contest was Ethnic Faces with their original song "Within Tribes". The second and*

third prize winners were the band Slyk and rockabilly band Runaway Boys. Punk bands Wuds, Betrayed and new wave band Ironic Trauma were placed in the semi-finals round.]

MRR: What did you guys do with the prize money?
We split it into five. Don't know what the other guys did with their 2,000. I remember giving P600 or P800 to my Mom, hehe.

MRR: Any memorable stories during the grand finals?
Wow, too many to mention. I'll just mention one. Everyone was looking forward to Betrayed winning the grand prize but the band's line-up on the grand finals changed because Buddy Trinidad and the bass player already left for the US after the semis. Looks had something to do with it in my opinion. They were *konyo* looking in leather jackets or muscle shirts, playing their anthemic "Never Meant to be This Way." The looks and attitude of the original contest line-up was a vital part. Not that the unit at the grand finals was not okay, but it was different. I believe we deserved the grand prize but Betrayed could've given us a run for the money if the original members stayed 'til the finals. (I have a VHS of the complete band contest but unfortunately, the tape was borrowed and was never returned).

MRR: After the punk band contest experience, where else did Ethnic Faces play and who did you guys play with?
Dance parties mostly in Makati, Brave New World, private parties. There were gigs wherein we played back to back with show bands, some with other underground punk and new wave bands. In the succeeding months after the wining the band contest, Ethnic Faces and Ironic Trauma (Dawn precursor) were like brother bands so both groups were inseparable in a couple of gigs.

MRR: I remember seeing Ethnic Faces in one of those gigs and I noticed that you have a knife attached to the bridge of your bass. What was that all about?
Hehe, that was a Yamaha bass. I used that knife as bridge—and as a warning to unruly Punks who wanted to mess with us. Fortunately, I never got to use it other than as bridge.

MRR: What is the current status of Ethnic Faces nowadays?
Never really disbanded. After Jack left in '96, vocalists replaced him. Two members joined Color It Red. I organized an '80s music gig called Klub '80s in 2014 in which Jerks, Wuds and Ethnic Faces played one set each. I'm planning to record songs from our aborted second full-length album.

MRR: Having experienced the brave new music in the early '80s, what advice can you give to the new generation of bands today?
Try their best to be original. It's much better and more fulfilling to be known for your original materials than playing other people's music. Always keep your ears and mind open—especially if you're in the music industry. Respect people's capabilities. Meet and work with them where they're at.

MRR: Well, thank you again Rhany for making time to answer these questions. The stories that you've shared meant a lot to me and to a lot of folks who have supported the '80s and the current music scene in the Philippines. Also, thanks to your brother Jayvee for reaching out to you and making this interview possible. Maraming Salamat, Mabuhay ang Musikang Pilipino!

Jesus Perez Gonzales was a member of Valley of Death (VOD), a punk / hardcore band from Marikina City, Philippines from 1988 to 1989. He moved to San Francisco, Ca in June 1989. In the Bay Area, he co-founded the piNoisepop Asian American Music Festival which ran from November 1998 to August 2005. He currently plays bass for AninoKo, an all Pinoy hardcore / thrash band from the Bay Area.

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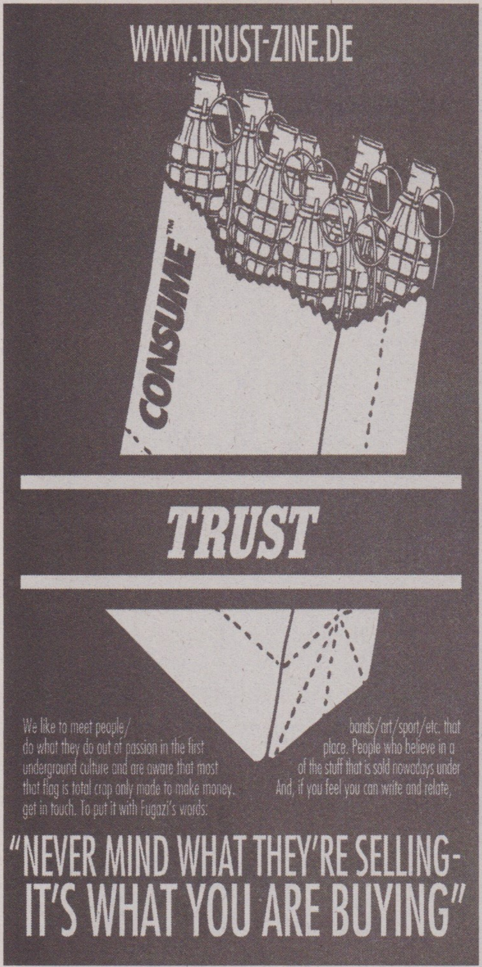

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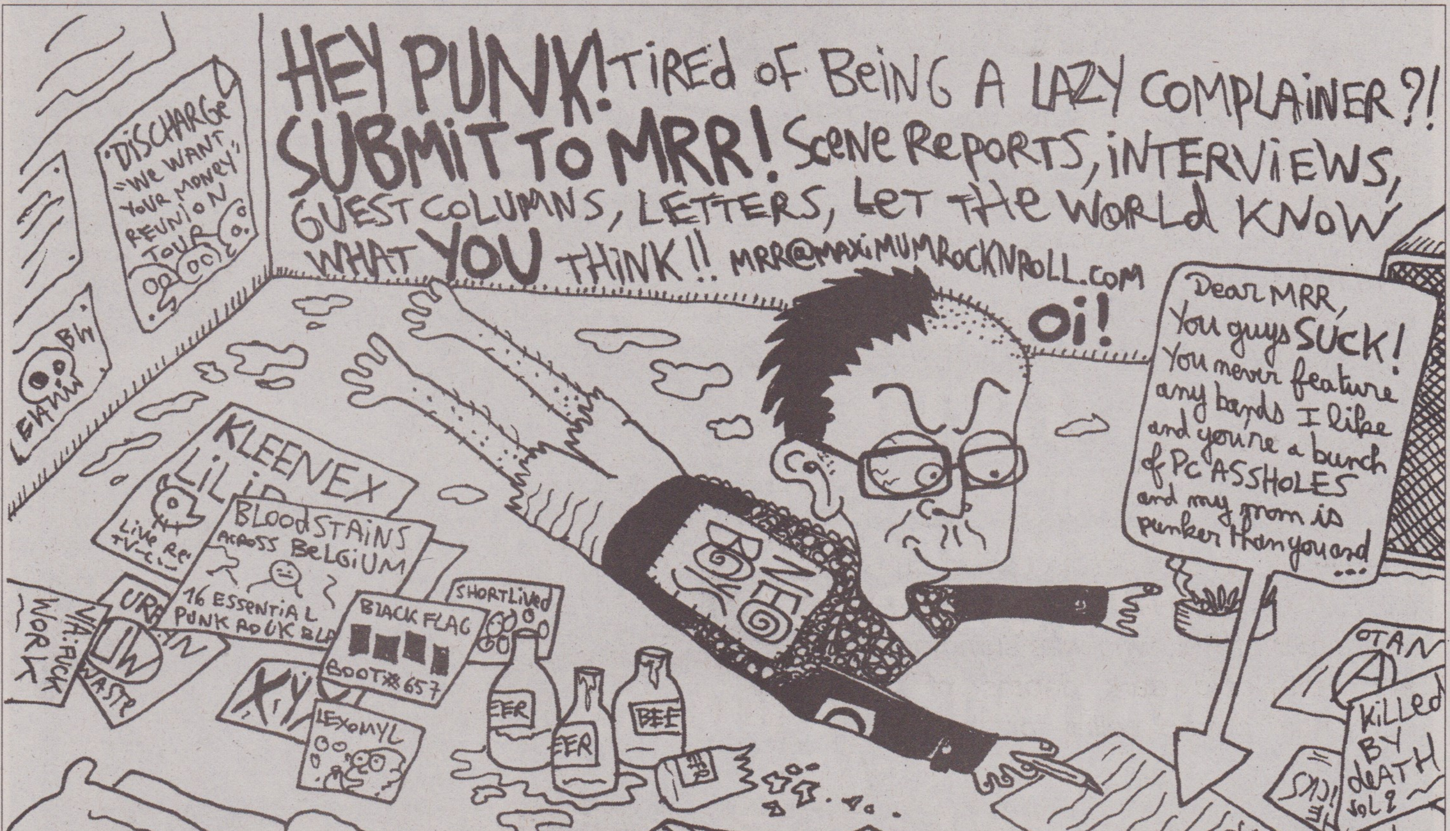
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COLD INSTITUTION

Cold Institution are a rather fine post-punk band straight outta Helsinki, Finland. Two bass guitars, pounding drums, heartfelt vocals. Gloomy, rhythmic, bleak—the works. They will be touring Europe with Rue Morgue (another example of post-punk at its finest) in August. Go see them and marvel at the bands' nuclear war proof hats and eyeliner.

Interviewed by Jukka Karihtala in June 2017. Special guest appearance by Waldemar of RM, who was summoned from the cold dark depths of his residential potato cellar for this very occasion.

Photos and art courtesy of the band and Simo P. Julvi.

MRR: Please let us know your names, ages, instruments and favorite breakfasts. When and under what kind of circumstances was the band born? You had a change of drummers a year or so ago. Was there a bizarre gardening accident involved?

Vilja: Hi, my name is Vilja, I'm 28. I play the bass. I like tofu and coffee. Mitro leaving the band has got to do with sowing seed but I don't know if it was an accident.

I think the band first started in Puntala-Rock 2012, when me and Laiho were sitting on the hills in the festival area quite drunk at three or four in the morning; it was pretty dark. I told him I'd been thinking about a thing like this and he announced he'd join so that was it. We started with just the two of us and made the first songs with only two bass guitars, no drums or nothing. It was a bit of a challenge. Then he somehow lured in Mitro, and some time after that we found Iida in a bar. We didn't really know each other yet. So it took a while to find all the pieces!

Iida: I'm Iida, not 30 just yet. I like healthy breakfasts like fruits and preferably enjoyed with the morning paper. This is the first proper band I've sung in and it's been a very educational experience. Joining a band with people I didn't know at all was a bit scary in the beginning but I'd say instead of just bandmates I've got really dear friends now too.

Ville: My name is Ville, and I'm the new guy in the band. I play drums and I replaced Mitro in spring 2016. Me and Mitro didn't communicate that much when I replaced him, but he and his wife got a child and I think that was the main reason for him quitting. I think it went pretty smoothly. I even bought his drums after a few practices. It took a while for me to learn the songs, as well as his tricks and drumming style, but I'm satisfied with how the songs sound now. For breakfast I usually eat muesli with oat milk. On Saturdays something fancier, like fruit smoothies and sandwiches.

Cold Institution

Laiho: My first name is Ville, too. Age 34. Bass guitar. I don't usually eat breakfast.

MRR: So you have two bass guitars in the band. Why did you want it to be this way? Have you considered adding some other instruments? Do you get to hear any grumbling for not having an actual guitar player in your ranks?

Vilja: Well, people do tell us to get a guitar or keyboards, and they might be right, but I'm stubborn and romantic and don't want to let go of the original idea. What it started with was almost like a visual idea of two interacting basslines in a very rudimentary soundscape. And that's how I like to keep it.

Laiho: We are not done with the original idea yet.

MRR: How do your music and lyrics come about? Who writes what and do you have to discuss / argue a lot while new material is on the planning board? The dark and gloomy lyrics (dealing with alienation, sexual / social roles, suicide, capitalist ruthlessness etc.) seem to be fitting the music rather well. To what extent can they be considered autobiographical, or can they?

Vilja: Iida has written most of the lyrics. I've made a few, most of which she's rejected, but they're definitely about actual real life things. Nowadays we mostly make new stuff by accident, we just play and it turns into something, and then the process of forcing it into a song is heartbreaking so we haven't finished much new songs lately.

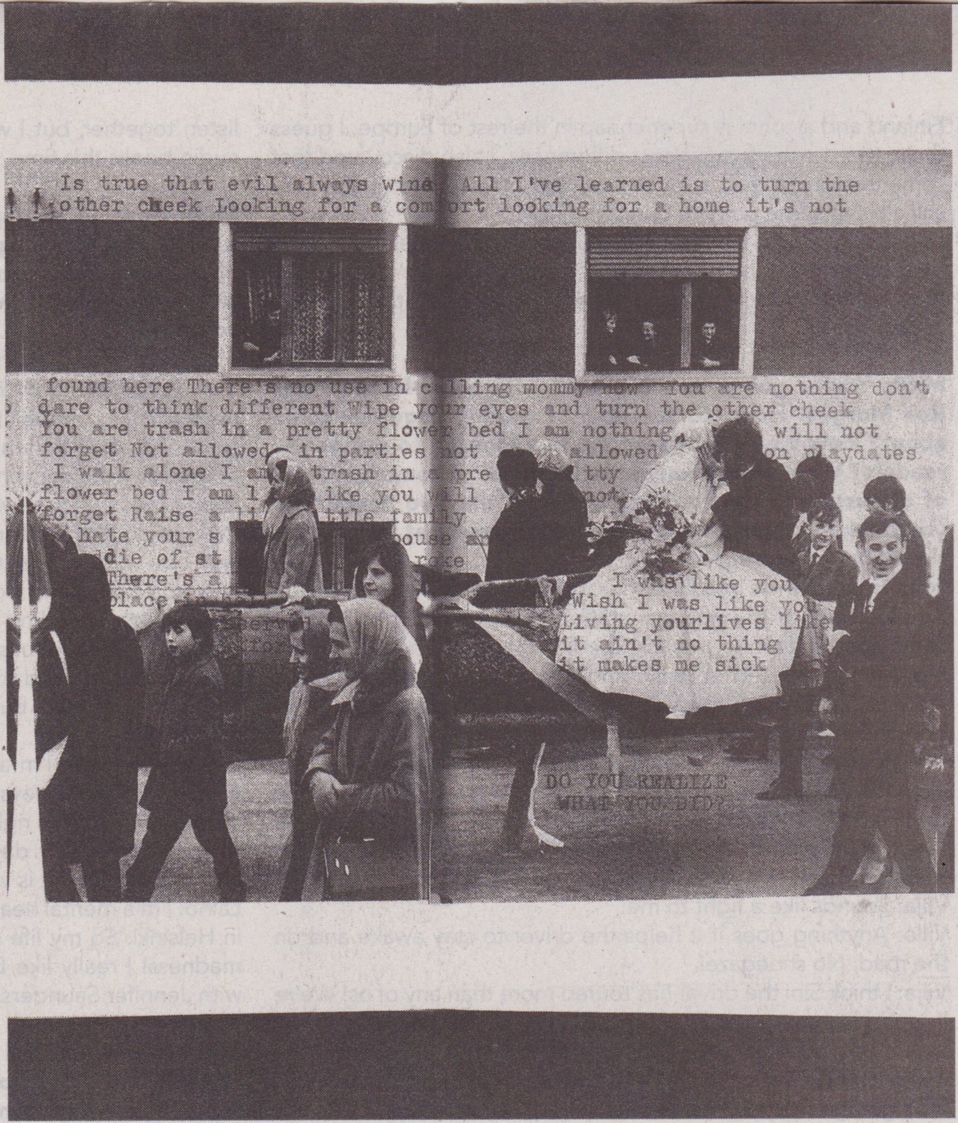
Iida: I usually have one line or a certain ambience in my mind and then the songs just kind of come together around that one thought. I have to admit that every lyric, to some extent, has something personal in it and some are even a bit painful, but it's not like I am singing straight from my diary. I actually have a lot of things in my life I'm happy and grateful about but you can't really sing about happy things in a post-punk band now can you? I do take great pride in my lyrics though and it's cool if our listeners pay attention to what I'm singing about. I don't want to write generic songs about war, stupid politicians or boy meets girl. There always has to be a certain twist and, yes, I think the sense of alienation is always at the core of everything.

Laiho: I've made a few as well that are not autobiographical. Iida makes better lyrics so…

Vilja: We did actually fight about the writing process in the beginning a bunch of times but that doesn't happen anymore.

Ville: I'd like to try to write some lyrics in the future, but that's the hardest part for me in making rock music. I know how to write a 100-page zine, but can't make eight lines work together.

MRR: The term "post-punk" has often been invoked in reference to the kind of music you make. Would you agree? If not, what sort of label would you prefer or do you feel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DO YOU REALIZE WHAT YOU DID?

the need to have one to begin with? Has your music been subject to much critical acclaim? Your previous / other bands have profiled more or less as fast hardcore. Has the music that Cold Institution makes caused any confusion among your listeners? What is the nastiest thing said about Cold Institution you've come across?

Vilja: Well I think the term post-punk is wider than the term punk itself, so of course that is fitting. But I don't know if I consider us post-punk in the way that the term is used in the 2010s. I don't really care.

I know we're definitely not everyone's cup of tea but we're also not forcing ourselves on anyone so people don't seem to have the need to be nasty.

Iida:I guess the term post-punk sums it up quite well. I think it begun with the idea of cold '80s, East Germany and concrete jungles echoing with greyness but recently we've evolved towards a more organic sound. We're all really punks whose hearts passionately beat for hardcore but with Cold Institution we're dwelling into a world of bleakness and despair and that's how I like to keep it. Definitely not for everyone, I know, but I haven't heard anything nasty or mean so far.

MRR: Some of you already have a number of European and U.S. tours under your belt. Would you like to elaborate on these? What would you consider the main differences in gigging in Finland, Europe and the U.S. respectively? What are you looking forward to the most as far as your upcoming European tour is concerned?

Iida: I'm looking forward to seeing new places, meeting new people, sitting and waiting around a lot but also having the time of our lives while being totally sleep deprived. I hope not to get sick with the flu and lose my voice though! That always seems to happen when I don't get to sleep or eat well.

Vilja: I don't know what to elaborate— it's mostly sitting in cars and sleeping on floors and so on! There's no glory to it, but I like touring a lot and feel comfortable being on the road. It's how things should always be—every day you have a goal and the people around you share it, sometimes it takes a lot of work but is mostly always achievable, when you do good it's super rewarding, and it's OK to be weird and tired. I wish life was always that easy!

The biggest difference between here and the States is the culture of not sharing backline. That was difficult to understand. Honestly I haven't toured that much, and not very recently, so I'm no expert. There's differences all over but the basic setting stays the same. I can't wait to go!

Ville: I just got back home from an almost three-week European Tour with Plastic Tones, and my back is on fire from all the sitting! We really need to schedule some time for gymnastics with Cold Institution! Or at least I have to! Smoking indoors is prohibited in

Finland and alcohol is super cheap in the rest of Europe. I guess these two are the two biggest differences. I also discovered that some trends in hardcore punk that I thought were long gone are still alive in some parts of Europe.

Laiho: I've toured central Europe like eleven times so I don't expect much anything surprisingly new. A lot more free alcohol than touring in Finland which is nice. More sleep than touring in Russia.

MRR: You're going to make said tour with fellow Finns Rue Morgue. How did the idea of touring together come about? How would you describe Rue Morgue to our gentle readers? What would you bet to be the most common topics of discussion in the tour van between the two bands? Do you think Rue Morgue's drummer's brimmed hat will survive the rigors of touring?

Iida: Anyone who's into Finnish post punk classics Musta Paraati, Kuudes Tunti or the new generation Helsinki vampires Kuudes Silmä should definitely check Rue Morgue out! They're getting big, here in Finland at least, and why not, as their material is really solid, bowing towards the traditions of post-punk while bringing in some new, refreshing ideas too.

Waldemar's hat will survive a nuclear apocalypse as will my eyeliner. Not so sure about our livers, kidneys and souls. While touring I think we're going to argue over what we're going to listen on the road. I'm going to vote for Beyonce and heavy metal whereas everyone else in the van is going to disagree.

Vilja: Sounds like a fight to me.

Ville: Anything goes if it helps the driver to stay awake and on the road. No shoegaze!

Vilja: I think Sini the driver has toured more than any of us! We're in good hands.

Laiho: You guys probably want to listen to punk / hc and your heavy metal, I'll stick to my headphones with my jazz, shoegaze, '60's garage / psych rock, and indie pop etc.! Haha!

Iida: Maybe we'll find a truce with '80s pop.

Ville: On my last tour I took like eight audio books with me to listen together, but I was almost laughed out of the car. So no audio books this time.

MRR: How do you spend your time apart from playing in a punk rock band? Special interests, jobs, studies, hobbies, obsessions, dirty secrets? If you had a whole day devoted to whatever you'd ever want to do, how would you spend your time?

Iida: I study and in the future hope to work with the beauty business which I think might be a bit surprising to some people, even a little contradicting, while living by punk sub- / counter culture ideals, but then again I think I want to try and do my share of breaking the conventional, toxic gendered beauty standards.

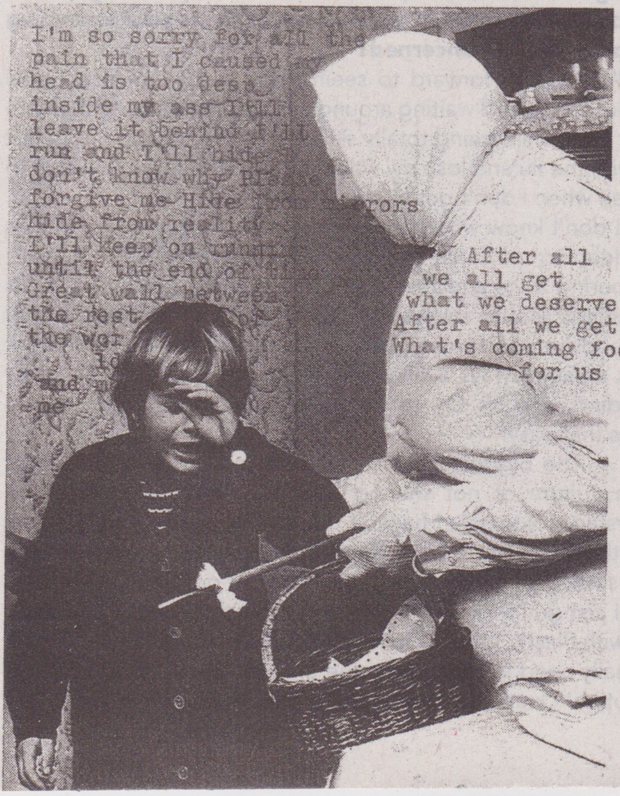
Vilja: I mostly like to walk around and look at stuff, that's what I would do. I'm studying social work or work in the social field and how to use arts in that context. I hope this will turn into something cool and worthwhile in the future.

Ville: Most of my time is more or less connected to punk rock. I organize quite a lot of shows and tours. I do posters and different kind of graphics and sometimes record covers. I used to write a lot of zines as well, but haven't got the time (or interest) to do that lately.

In my freetime I'm a nurse at a children's daycare center. It's an easy job and it pays pretty OK. My expenses are low though. What I'd love to do right now is to go to hike in Lapland. I'd like to get lost for few days, drink from a puddle, and eat moldy bread. Somehow it is very refreshing.

Laiho: I'm a mental health practical nurse in a psychiatric hospital in Helsinki. So my life revolves constantly around some kind of madness! I really like British comedy and I'm almost obsessed with Jennifer Saunders.

MRR: Could you tell us a little bit about your hometown Helsinki? What do you like about it the most and what the least? These days some bigger Finnish cities have their own punk / underground venues / centers like TVO and Reviiri in Turku, Vastavirta in Tampere, and Tukikohta in Oulu yet



Helsinki seems to have had considerable difficulties in maintaining a venue / center like this for quite some time. What do you consider to be the reasons for this? While we're at it, what do you think of the Finnish punk / HC scene as a whole at the moment? Furthermore, if I'm not mistaken Iida hails from Oulu, Northern Finland. What brought you down South and do you still pay attention to what's going on in your old home turf?

Iida: Yeah, my family moved up North to Oulu when I was around nine but by then all the other kids had already made friends and I was kind of left out, plus the town at least back in the '90s had a strange, tense religious atmosphere to it, so I never fully felt at home or like I belonged there whereas in Helsinki I definitely feel like I belong. I don't visit Oulu much these days apart from the awesome punk fest HÄSSÄKKÄ-PÄIVÄT which takes place in July. People in Oulu seem to have a very special angle to punk and rock music in general, which I've to admit is maybe a bit too edgy and artsy for my taste. I do appreciate the effort of DIY culture there though, not always easy in a smaller town.

Helsinki is beautiful with cool people and has a very active scene even though the situation with good venues is challenging. Living anywhere else in this country wouldn't be easy, I'd be bored to death in a month! It's actually amazing how at the same time there might be several interesting shows you have a hard time choosing between.

Vilja: I'm a Helsinki fan too. It's a comprehensible size but still has a lot of variety and it's pretty. I've always lived close to the water.

We had a co-op for finding that venue for like seven years and it just didn't work out. Helsinki is pretty dense and people like to stick to their hoods so finding the right space in the right location was the main issue. Also we got bored and frustrated. We're in the process of running things down right now.

There seems to be this trend of professionalizing underground shows and happenings, and I kind of feel like the idea of culture production is the same for DIY, as gentrification is for areas. Sharing responsibility is the backbone of DIY but this crowd funding type of mentality just seems to turn things into a "you play / you pay" thing and that sucks.

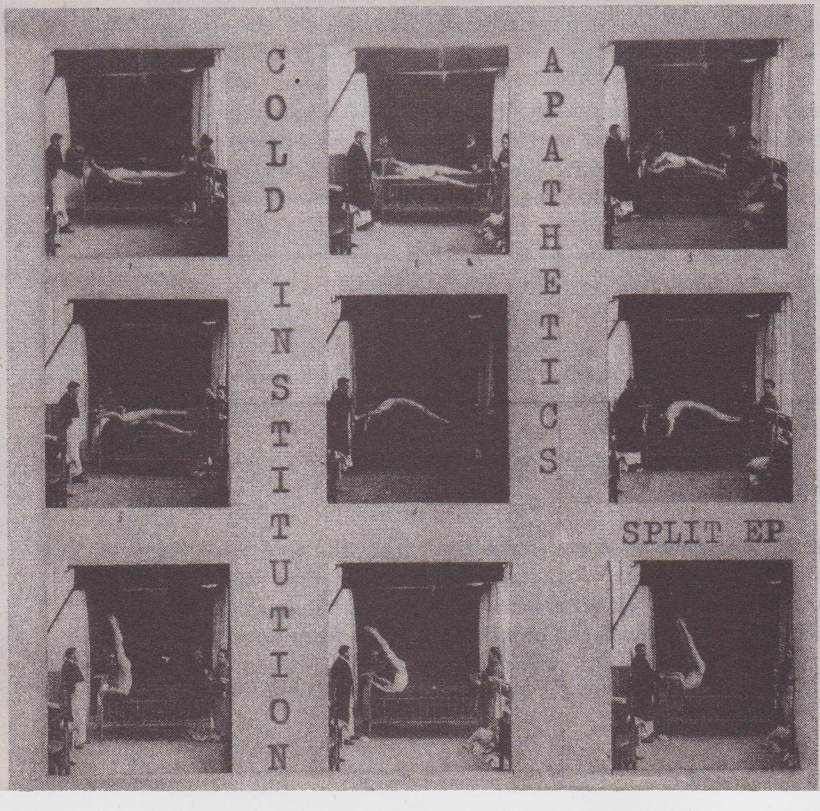
Ville: I moved to Helsinki in 2009, and I have no hurry of going anywhere else. Iida and Vilja said it well. But we do have some sort of an "own" place in Helsinki as well. Oranssi is an all ages venue that hosts dozens of low threshold DIY-shows every year, but on the other hand it is funded by the City Of Helsinki and ruled by the cultural centre Kaapelitehdas, so it's not autonomous or run by us but still really punky and easy going. I feel like home at Oranssi, but it's different than the mighty Tukikohta for example.

Laiho: The main thing I like about the Finnish punk / HC scene (and the underground in general) is that it doesn't appear to be so divided. All kind of bands play at the same gigs and know each other.

MRR: Are any of you involved politically? Do you share a common outlook as far as politics are concerned or do you discuss issues like that inside the band at all? How would you describe the current political situation in Finland at the moment?

Vilja: Not really no. I spent my youth in the animal rights movement, and other movements, and kind of burned out on it. But I consider working in the fields of social and cultural issues to be highly "political" or socially significant at least, and I'm very determined in finding a way to work for things like social and cultural accessibility in the future. The current governmental situation here is so ridiculous that I don't want to go into the details.

Iida: I guess operating mostly inside the punk scene sometimes gives you the false idea that everyone agrees with you politically. Then you read the news and are reminded with what's going on in this country or the world in general. I think the recent rise of the hard, right wing, xenophobic and outright racist movement is very alarming. I myself am very interested in intersectional feminism and hope to educate myself more and more about privilege and oppression.



Laiho: I'm conscious of what's happening around us, but can't say that I'm active politically. I could rant about the current political situation and the change of political climate in Finland but I have to take good care of my blood pressure, so I won't...
Ville: I'm not involved in any politics either, but I still think I am, and all of us as well are still political in our everyday life. Representative democracy is a puppet theater but the political situation is still tense.

MRR: Your drummer has apparently done jail time as a conscientious objector. Ville, what were the reason behind this decision? How long was your sentence and where did you serve it? Based on your experiences, what do you think of the Finnish penal system and how were your relations to other inmates? *[Ed. note: All Finnish young men are supposed to serve in the military for at least six months. Women can do military service as well, but it is voluntary. If you can prove you have certain physical / mental problems you can be exempted. You can also opt for civil service, which lasts for about 12 months. Civil servicemen work in hospitals, daycare centers etc. If you refuse both military and civil service you end up in jail for about six months. One notable exception have been Jehovah's Witnesses, who have generally been exempted on the grounds of their religious beliefs.)*
Ville: I was working in a children's daycare center, I was paying my taxes, and in many ways I did fit into the terms of a model citizen, except that I didn't want to participate in the war games by going into the army, or civil service, which I thought was more of a punishment than a real option. Also I did not feel welcome, no matter where I went, and the idea of protecting a society that won't accept you the way you are felt really fucked up, and it still does.

I was in Norway when I got a call that I should have been signing in to the civil service. I wrote them a letter saying that I wasn't coming and maybe a half a year afterwards I went to court and I was sentenced to six months in Suomenlinna Prison. It's a place for long term convicts who are finishing their sentences, as well as non-dangerous people, like the majority of political prisoners, drunk drivers, small scale drug dealers, thieves etc. The roommate I spent the most time with was a millionaire.

The other inmates didn't really understand what I told them and after a while I stopped trying to explain. Some of the people there were really mean and frightening, but most of the people were OK or bearable. People were obviously dealing with their own problems and didn't have any interest in harassing smaller ones.

I was sentenced for six months but I got an amnesty from the President of Finland after four months of being there. The judge who sentenced me apologized, and the guards told me that no pacifist should never end up here. These proved to me even more that the penalty system, at least in this side of the field, is a joke. A bit afterwards they changed the penalty from imprisonment to home arrest.

It was a pretty educational experience I would say. Actions have consequences.

MRR: Provided that you come back from the tour with you sanity mainly intact, what can we expect from Cold Institution in the near future? Where do you see yourselves (both as a band and as individuals) being three years from now?
Iida: I don't know what's going to happen, I'd like to tour France, Spain or why not even the States! Hopefully we'll write more new material. In my personal life I see myself working a shitty job that doesn't pay, going to shows and drinking beer with friends on weekends, so I guess nothing will change except for I hope to have adopted a doggo friend and have gained a bigger record collection.
Ville: I have no idea what I'm doing in three years. I feel like my thirties crisis has already started, and I feel pretty clueless about my life in general. I'm enjoying it though.
Laiho: I'll be doing the same thing only with less hair and more fat.
Vilja: I'm going to have a super cool job and make great things happen. Cold Institution is going to tour Australia and the Moon.
Iida: Oh yeah, and we're gonna win the Eurovision song contest too.

MRR: Is there a story to be told behind the name Cold Institution? What is the coldest institution you can think of? Thank you.
Vilja: All of us are or have been dealing with institutionalized care in one way or another, and I at least have a lot of trouble relating to it, so that's where it springs from. But there's no funny story behind it, or I can't remember there being one. I misspell it a lot.

I've drawn a lot of inspiration from the history of the Salpetriere hospital which was the first mental asylum that photographed their patients (most of which were "hysteric women") as a means to document and present certain diseases and conditions for the public. It's creepy cold stuff. I think I was thinking about this a lot when we started.
Laiho: It was a joke that I made (with band names starting cold this and cold that), but after that it kind of took on some meaning just how Vilja described it, so it got stuck. The coldest institution is probably some death camp in the past or in the future.

coldinstitution@gmail.com / coldinstitution.bandcamp.com / badhairlifedistro@gmail.com / blamethevictim13@gmail.com

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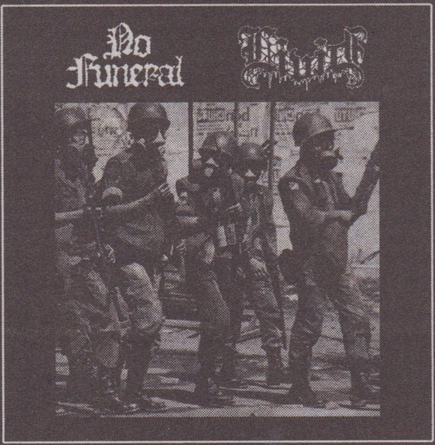
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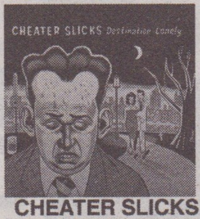
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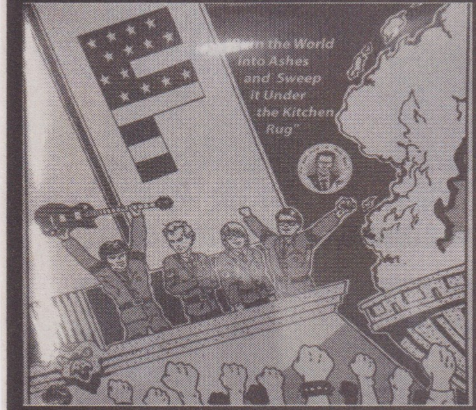
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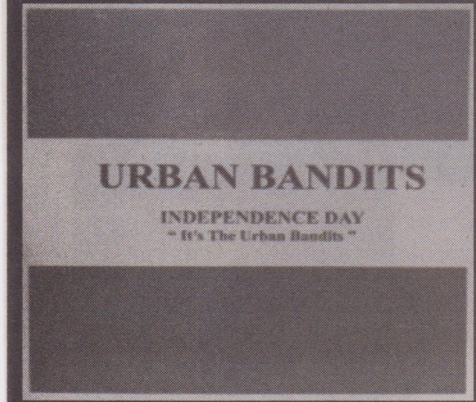
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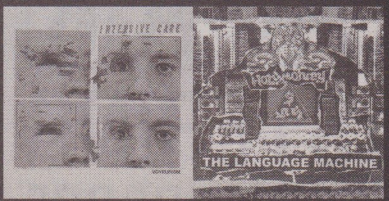
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The First Rule of Punk

By Celia C. Pérez
Viking, 2017
336 pgs | $16.99

The First Rule of Punk is the first novel for kids aged nine to twelve of its kind. Its first-person narration by Malú, a twelve-year-old, seventh-grade, zine-making Latina girl who partly grew up in her dad's record store and loves punk rock, lends a unique, witty, and sharp voice to the story that's not often present in children's literature. While the overall "Be Yourself" theme holds the story together, it's the setting and the sub-themes of identity, friendship, and DIY that significantly drive the plot.

When Malú is forced to leave Florida and move to Chicago with her college-professor mother, whom Malú nicknames SuperMexican, she finds out a lot about herself in ways that will both inspire and entertain a wide age-range of readers. Any book that has its third word as "punk" and includes the word "zine" by the third paragraph is onto something. By page four, the reader is already inspired to make their own zine. And by the end of Chapter One, which ends with an eight-page zine titled *There is no Place Like Home*, I was homesick for the decades-ago Florida bands and zines on which I cut my own DIY punk teeth.

Malú's move to Chicago is wrought with the typical worries any preteen kid of divorced parents would have over having to make all new friends and leaving one parent behind, but for Malú, it's complicated by a cultural shift that forces her to confront her own identity. In her mind, she can't be both punk and Latina. Her mother wants one thing, "It would be so lovely to see you looking like una señorita," but Malú wants something else. And when she gets called a "coconut" on her first day at José Guadalupe Posada Middle School by a popular senorita peer, Selena, she first guesses it means "weird" or "half Mexican." She quickly learns that it means "brown on the outside, white on the inside." Almost as quickly, Malú makes a zine about Poly Styrene titled *Señorita Germs*, is introduced to Lola Beltrán's music, and is taken under the wing of Mrs. Hidalgo who schools Malú on the Zeros, Alice Bag, the Plugz, and the Brat. Her budding self-awareness continues when she learns that her grandfather came to the U.S. with the Bracero Program, the 1942–1964 Mexican Farm Labor Supply Program that brought 4.6 million Mexicans to the U.S., and worked picking crops. She turns this new discovery into a zine titled *La Mano*. All of these events contribute to Malú's self-discovery.

With a flyer for the school talent show in hand, Malú starts her own punk band. In true punk form, she doesn't let a little thing like lack of skill deter her ambition. Also in true punk form, she doesn't let a little thing like not making the cut due to a too-loud audition deter the Co-Co's. Through her efforts to form the band, she meets "her people" and simultaneously works through strained mother / preadolescent daughter relationship puzzles, subverts middle school administrative injustice, and empathetically builds bridges with the one who'd antagonized her since day one, Selena.

With her debut book for young readers, Pérez, a long time zine-maker, fills a void with this relatable story. For the punk music scene, this book shows DIY in action and explores its edgy world through a middle school lens. It provides a realistic example of one young person finding themselves through self-expression.The interspersed journal-like zines provide a graphic element that would appeal to graphic novel fans and that aid Malú's personal growth. However, its overall effect is more important than that.

Preteen girls of color who read this book will be encouraged to see themselves beyond stereotypes and fully embrace their own unique visions and goals. By heeding her dad's first rule of punk to "be yourself," and following her own weirdo will, Malú grew to see herself as a Mexican-American, a zine creator, a musician, and young woman.

I want a copy of this book in every middle school library and Language Arts classroom. And I want Malú to be my preteen kid's best friend.

—Jessica Mills

Burn Down the American Plantation: Call for a Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement

by Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement
RAM, 2017
85 pgs | free pdf online at revolutionaryabolition.org or $12.00 from AK Press

In this moment, political optimism is difficult to fathom. Many people, who perhaps more recently became disenchanted with the failure of the election, cannot even conceptualize a future safe from obliteration. Despite the prevailing narrative of progression or regression Revolutionary Abolitionist Movement looks at enduring international models of resilience and resistance.

Burn Down the American Plantation is a call to action that strongly roots itself in the legacy of resistance of the struggle against slavery. From the beginning of this small book / long essay we are reminded that slavery has never ended; it was only adapted to fit liberal perceptions of freedom. If we conceptualize a historical struggle to end slavery and domination throughout the history of this country we increase our capacity to see inroads where previously there was no passage.

In light of this point of departure for aligning various struggles from around the world *Burn Down the American Plantation* begins by centering the American history of Black Liberation. It finds strength from sources as diverse as Harriet Tubman's militant guerilla tactics and coalitions with maroon colonies of the American South, to the Black Panther Party, the underground network of direct action revolutionaries The Black Liberation Army, and the more recent work being done institutionally with the academic affinity known as Afro-pessimism and their connections to Black Lives Matter and other recent struggles against police violence and urban extermination and displacement.

Building on this foundation they begin to draw in more international examples of autonomous resilient communities including the rebels of Rojava and Chiapas. If you spent your time in and around the Occupy movement and are looking for a departure from texts that bleat convoluted abstract calls to action or whatever a *Tiqqun* is, consider RAM's imperative to concentrate on community defense, personal accountability, and an anti-racist feminist analysis against capitalism.

—E Conner

Corta-e-Cola / Punk Comix
by Afonso Cortez and Marcos Farrajota
Chili Com Carne, 2017
256 pgs | €15,00

Corta-e-Cola / Punk Comix has been in the works and has finally come out on Chili Com Carne, Thisco and Zerowork Records. This book came out as a two-sided or split book written entirely in Portuguese (sorry y'all), half about the portrayal of Portuguese punk in comics and half a history of Portuguese punk through the artwork of records that came out between 1978 and 1998. The book also comes with a CD on the comic side, which is a small compilation of songs from Portuguese bands referencing comics and superheroes. What the CD is not is a compilation of Portuguese punk songs referenced in the other side of the book, but hopefully someone will put that out one day. For now, you'll have to do the research yourself!

Marcos Farrajota of Chili Com Carne has documented a history of punk comics in the Portuguese context, which both takes primarily from British punk and lives independently from it in a setting where punk doesn't necessarily look or feel like what was going on in the rest of the world. It captures an overall feeling of the late '70s and '80s in which Portugal is recovering from the Revolution of 1974, in an aftermath in which the cultural and musical setting is a few decades behind. This side of the split book has the feel of a zine, with handwritten annotations and excerpts of the comics being mentioned. The artists reflect on a country where the decaying urban life translates into the depiction of a void and a sadness that is still present in Portuguese culture today. It accompanies the evolution of Portuguese comics from its very political post-fascist history until the boom of the democratization of the means of production.

In *Corta-e-Cola* Afonso Cortez uses the artwork of the punk and hardcore bands between 1978 and 1998 as a starting point to share stories of the bands that were able to put out a record in those years, as well as some of the stories of the bands that didn't. As someone who started living punk in Lisbon around 1997–8, I consider this a solid documentation of the evolution of Portuguese rock into a less than booming industry, to an increasingly prolific music scene that was as divided as it was specific. Different cities had different scenes and sometimes a short train or boat ride across the river was enough to find a small but *diehard* scene. I'd also point out that both sides of the book don't particularly feature women or poc, but both authors heavily mention the dynamics with skinheads and the strong anti-fascist scene.

Overall, the two books together complement each other in giving a rich visual and historical context of this so seldom documented scene. If you don't speak fluent Portuguese, latin language speakers might be able to understand it, particularly those who speak Spanish. If not, all the names of artists, books, zines, bands and labels are duly highlighted, so you can piece the whole thing together.

—Nônô Noxx

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MOVIES

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CAROLYN KEDDY

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I think I am ODing on nostalgia. It may simply be that I am of that age where things I am interested in are getting old. So it is easy to want to "look back". But it is getting to be too much. Then this happened. I walked in on a conversation between a teenaged college student and a person my age that kind of knocked me back. The student was going off on how he couldn't believe his friend would say Billy Idol is punk. "Billy Idol isn't punk," he exclaimed exasperatedly. I had to stop and listen because I couldn't even figure out where to start explaining to him the history of punk and how Billy Idol fits into it. I could tell he probably wouldn't believe me either because then he went off about how Blondie isn't punk either.

So this month I am happy there were no nostalgic punk documentaries for me to watch. I needed a break. Instead I got to see Danger Boys: Punks In Osaka. Danger Boys: Punks In Osaka is set in the present day, filmed over the last year and covering bands most people probably haven't heard of. I know other punks are documenting their current scenes too which is great. Occasionally I get see to one. Even still, it is such a refreshing change from hearing about the good old days. The punks in Osaka play shows to small crowds, they are doing it for the fun of it and they aren't telling me how much better it was in the '70s.

While the punks in Osaka aren't much different than the punks elsewhere—they hang out, play music, goof around, get drunk, etc.—I still enjoy seeing them in action. The footage in Danger Boys: Punks In Osaka is a combination of live performances and music videos. Some of the bands are SK8NIKS, Flat Sucks, Terrible Joke, and CW. Unfortunately, not many of the musicians are interviewed. The majority of the ones that are interviewed are not Japanese. That seems a little odd. James Ryan Kelly has the most to say about the Osaka punk scene. He may be American. It is not specified. He plays in a bunch of bands and runs the label Tani9 Records which releases records by the bands in this scene.

The name Danger Boys: Punks In Osaka is kind of deceptive. There are women involved in this scene too. In fact, the two female bands featured in the film PiPi and TokoTokoTonnToko's are the most interesting bands included. While the male bands are either hardcore or pop punk, both PiPi and TokoTokoTonnToko's are art-y punk bands who are on their own wild trajectory. There is some cutesiness, but also there is something unhinged and weird. TokoTokoTonnToko's are featured over the end credits, but their performance keeps continuing on for another twenty minutes after the credits end. I didn't want to stop watching.

Danger Boys: Punks In Osaka is a quick look at the scene. The film itself is thirty-five minutes. It has a casual feel. It is almost as if you spent a week in Osaka hanging with these punks. If I did I would have asked more questions. (facebook.com/dangerboysmovie)

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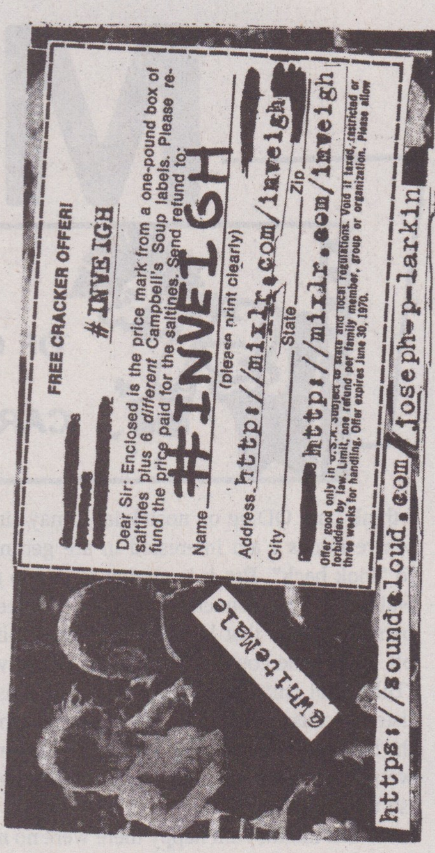

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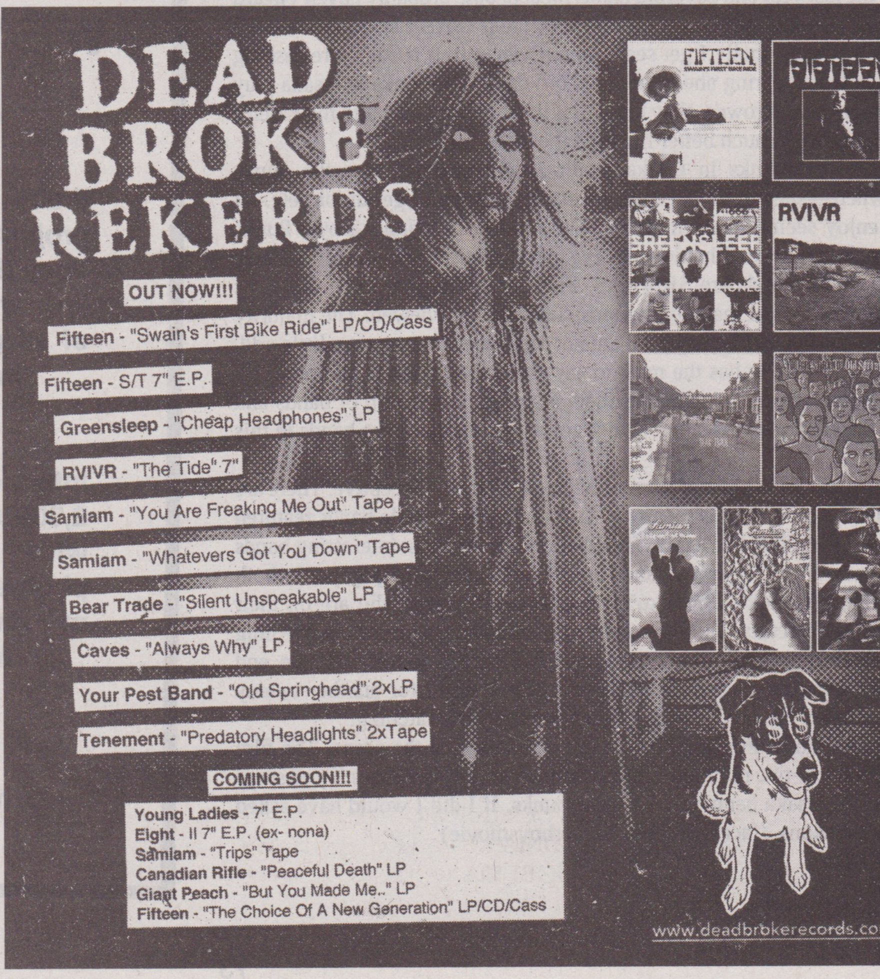

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RECORDS

For review and radio play consideration, send two copies of vinyl or one copy of CD-only releases to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146, USA. We will review everything that falls within our area of coverage: punk, garage, hardcore, etc.—no major labels or labels exclusively distributed by major-owned distros. Releases without vocals or drums will not be considered. Please include contact information and let us know where your band is from! No reviews of test pressings or promo CDs without final artwork. All records reviewed are added to our archive, the largest collection of punk records in the world.

(AM) Allan McNaughton
(AU) Andrew Underwood
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(BT) Ben Trogdon
(CK) Carolyn Keddy
(CR) Camylle Reynolds
(CS) Chris Hubbard
(DB) Daniel Becker
(DG) Dan Goetz
(DZ) Ryan Modee
(EW) Eli Wald
(FS) Fred Schrunk
(GA) Grace Ambrose
(GB) Graham Booth
(GH) Greg Harvester
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(LP) Langford Poh
(LT) Lena Tahmassian
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MC) Mitch Cardwell
(MM) Marissa Magic
(MW) Max Wickham
(PA) Pete Avery
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(RK) Ramsey Kanaan
(RL) Ray Lujan
(RO) Rotten Ron Ready
(SW) Shivaun Watchorn
(WN) Robert Collins

AFTERLIFE – LP

This doom-ridden epic crust band from the Czech Republic is as intense as they are grim. I have been pretty burned out on this kind of thing recently, but these guys know how to do it fucking right! From the agonizing ten ton drone outs, to the unsettling apocalyptic melodies, the scene is set for disaster. Get yourself together, because these four well-crafted slow burners will have you soaring on black clouds with the grim reaper. (BA)
(Phobia / Pure Heart)

ANDY THE BAND – "Carry On" EP

This record will win you over. Once the needle hits the groove, you brace yourself for a slightly goofy garage rock EP. And it kinda is, but it's *soooooo* much better than that. It's got the anthemic styles of ANDREW WK, the catchiness of REIGNING SOUND, and the riffs of JAY REATARD. Yes, it's sorta cheesy, but the cheesy you like and get hooked on. The definition of a fun record. Can you admit you like some dorky rock'n'roll? You'll love this. (FS)
(Instigate / Sabotage)

ANTAGONIZERS ATL / THE WARNING SHOTS – split EP

The WARNING SHOTS contribute two poppy songs with great guitars and vocal harmonies. I'd never heard of this band before but I'm sold. ANTAGONIZERS ATL give us two street punk tunes that remind me of LOWER CLASS BRATS and OXYMORON with brilliant gang vocals and short guitar solos. I love it! (DB)
(Crowd Control Media / Last Punkrockers)

ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE – "League Style (Loosen Up Volume 1)" CD

I am sure every punk is aware of the early British punks' love for reggae music, so it may not surprise anyone that when they were first together ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE had the idea to record a reggae covers album. That album never happened back then, but they decided 2017 was the year to do it. Here it is. As expected, it is not great. This is for fans only. There are ten songs on this CD including ones by the TREMELOES, DERRICK MORGAN, DANDY LIVINGSTONE and the KINGSTONIANS. A very questionable choice for aging punks is PRINCE BUSTER's "Big Five"—"*It's gonna be pussy versus cocky tonight.*" I guess you gotta relive your more virile years somehow. Yikes. (CK)
(Cleopatra)

AVT – "Lo Queremos Todo" EP

Appealing jangly and poppy punk from Spain. The opening track has a more somber feel to it but is still as bouncy as the other three poppier tracks. Both vocalists are incredibly charming and a bit off key. My very spotty Spanish holds me back from fully grasping the lyrics, but they seem to be very clever and interesting. All four songs are catchy and this record is overall delightful. (MA)
(Andalucia Uber Alles / Discos Regresivos / Grabaciones Corruptas / 1 Minuta de Gloria)

AVT – "El Camino A Seguir" LP

AVT is instantly recognizable and classic sounding while retaining an urgency that keeps it from sounding like a stale nostalgia act. I'm hearing traces of the BRAT, VULPESS, MASSHYSTERI, GENERACION SUICIDA, and LA URSS in the feeling and execution of each song. There's an overall bounciness and directness to the whole album that makes it feel fully realized. Catchy, melodic, gutsy, and an instant classic....what more do you want? (GH)
(Grabaciones Corruptas)

AWEFUL KANAWFUL – "Clam's Casino" LP

Everyone who has written about Flying Nun Records has talked about the magical effect that isolation had on the development of that special sound those bands and that larger scene produced. I'm here today to talk about some of the other effects that isolation can have on bands, especially in the age of the internet. Rochester, NY is no Dunedin, but to a youth the minimum six hours that separate them from elsewhere might as well be a time zone. So somehow you discover FRANK ZAPPA, and from there you find all the bands that he was making fun of on *We're Only In It For The Money*. If you're one of the young goofballs in AWEFUL KANAWFUL, you write goofy and sometimes jittery songs in that style. The music is cartoony and jokey, but instead of trying to rip apart hippies like Frank was trying to do, these youths are moreso writing loving paeans to all that bygone era of music. The songs are lush with harmonies, flute, some uke, and maybe a mandolin, and the reverb is beautiful and period appropriate. For a more contemporary comparison, this would seem natural on a S.P.A.M.

Records comp with all the other misfit bands from some long past Geekfest. For those that care about such things, this is 100% not punk and like 95% not garage, but it is pretty strange. (LP)
(Chocolate Chin)

BABY SHAKES – "Turn It Up" LP
First line of the first song: "*We're back together*." Praise Jezus. I love me some BABY SHAKES. This one is definitely no let down. This is perfect pop music for me: mid-tempo, super catchy, super melodic, female fronted, but in no way wimpy. It's the perfect combination of pop, power pop, punk, and new wave. This reminds me of stuff like KATRINA AND THE WAVES, the GO-GO'S, and SUZY Y LOS QUATTRO. Includes an awesome cover of the SCIENTISTS classic "Last Night." This is worth searching for. (KK)
(Lil' Chewy)

BACK TO BASICS – CD
These guys from Japan play tight poppy punk that ranges from early '90s UK punk (think MEGA CITY 4, SNUFF, and SENSELESS THINGS) to '00s US punk (like DILLINGER FOUR and the STRIKE). The music on here is pretty cool, featuring some great playing and mod-ish elements. The songs are decent but the vocals have a monotone and off key quality that keep this from being great. It almost feels like a production issue where vocal tracks that were off were used anyways. I get that the singer is singing in a second language and isn't a pure pop vocalist, but if they ever get rid of the sour notes watch out! (RL)
(Fine Tuning!)

BAD COP/BAD COP – "Warriors" LP
The undeniable queens of modern day Fat Wreck! Since their 2011 formation BAD COP/BAD COP have released several records, and this album will not disappoint their fans. With catchy choruses, vocal harmonies, and energetic mid-tempo beats, it sounds like it could have been recorded by NO USE FOR A NAME ten years ago. I'm not trying to make it seem like this band is a copy of any other bands—sure it has a lot of the traditional Fat components, but they totally stand on their own. The writing, lyrics, performance, and recording are top-notch. Favorite tracks are "Womanarchist," "Why Change a Thing," "Victoria," "Warriors," and "Kids." I guess that's almost all of them! For fans of Fat Wreck type '90s pop-punk with brilliant and relevant lyrics. (DB)
(Fat Wreck)

BLANK SPELL – "Miasma" LP
For the uninitiated, BLANK SPELL is a three-piece sinister-sounding punk band from Philly. Icy-chorused guitar and bass are complemented with sharp vocal stabs, and it's all very rhythmic. There's rarely a 4/4 part, as most of their songs have weird sporadic time changes and revolving arrangements. There's an occasional hooky guitar flourish, but BLANK SPELL mostly twirls around with a dizzying effect. New details jump out with each new listen, which is always a plus. The songs are pretty short so the LP goes by quickly, but I feel the best tracks on here woulda made a stellar 7". The overall presentation and art improve the experience, specifically the textured sleeve and sexy black inner dust sleeve. (MA)
(World Gone Mad)

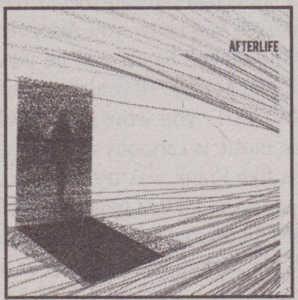
BLIND BUTCHER – "ALAWALAWA" CD
Surreal Swiss rock two-piece, genuine freaks playing an all over the place collage of sound that seems really influenced by SUICIDE but also seems sorta...Jim Rose Circus Lollapalooza sidestage circus insanity?! Like Steampunk Swiss kraut rock fans who are too in their own world to play NEU!-like or ALAN VEGA-like so they make their own uncool and crazed vision of that and it's sort of carnival-esqsue. The rockabilly wackiness makes me nauseous, but I could see 'em getting booked at big festivals. (LG)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

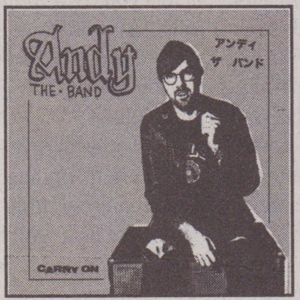
BOO HAG – "The Further" CD
BOO HAG are a two-piece band from South Carolina. The music is old-timey, stomping rockabilly with some surf music flourishes. It sounds kind of like the CRAMPS, but without an attempt to imitate LUX's vocal style. That is a good thing. Singer Saul G. Seibert has his own intense style even if it's more laid back. I like this. (CK)
(self-released)

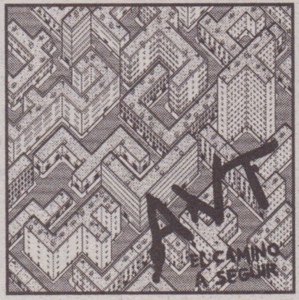
BO!ROCK1 – "此ノ崎ニテ" EP
Energetic and freaky-ass jams from Japan. The opener of this three-song EP has a straight punky vibe, like a poppier SLOWMOTIONS. The next couple tracks maintain the same energy and catchiness with added funk and disco, and even a harmonica on the B-side track. Yes, I know that sounds annoying, but the manic drumming and vocals keep the excitement high and it all works. Remember, BIG BOYS, MINUTEMEN, and TAR BABIES all managed to make great punk music incorporating these elements. It's a keeper. (MA)
(Debauch Mood)

BO!ROCK1 – "Blue Light Special" EP
I'm usually not a fan of this style of high-energy, rock'n'roll style of punk but BO!ROCK1 makes it work for me with a more manic energy and shorter songs. Picture an over the top SUPERSUCKERS or the NEW BOMB TURKS' first LP. The closer on this record has a real fourth-side-of-*Double Nickels on the Dime* feel to it. It's not what I expected and it's totally cool. (GH)
(Debauch Mood)

BRING THE DRONES – "Ignorance Paradise" LP
Guitars sound like they were plugged straight into the board via cheap distortion pedal, giving this a distinct Brazil 1983 sound in the six string department. The rest is like AUS ROTTEN via Sweden but it feels like it's always juuuust about to fall apart. (WN)
(Kibou / Phobia)







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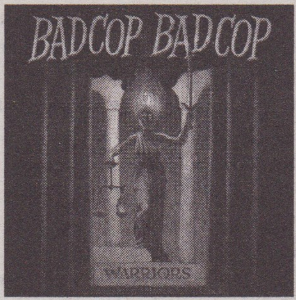


BLANK SPELL

BUCK GOOTER – "100 Bells" LP

BUCK GOOTER seem like they have a case of split personalities. Their music is guitar / synth driven and minimal, which sounds cool and fresh...albeit out of tune and lacking at times. They lyrics are somewhat split down the middle. Some of the tunes are pained tirades against fear, loneliness, and fracking. Others (like "Goats are Cool" and "Pray to God") feel hokey and out of place against the otherwise heavier topics. I can't help but think of MOJO NIXON when I hear the more lighthearted songs, which isn't a bad thing, but they feel completely wrong for the LP. Still, I like the looseness of the record. Sometimes it's like a modern day CRAMPS who actually want to tell you some useful info. Not bad. (GH)
(Ramp Local)

THE CAVEMEN – "Dog On A Chain" EP

Surprisingly admirable ungawa from New Zealand! Did the 21st century even happen for this lot? Sounds like they've never lived in a world where Budget Rock was a rare commodity. Kudos for fanning that flame, even if you're a world away and should be more obsessed with the ENEMY. OK: three tunes, all great, recalling fallen soldiers from the Bag Of Hammers, Real, and Rip Off rosters, showing snotty savagery of a vintage heard all too rarely in the last decade-plus. Angrier than any of the modern-day units doin' this sorta thing. Stop YouTubin' and regress back to trash punk. (MC)
(Slovenly)

CHAIN AND THE GANG – "Best of Crime Rock" LP

Having been a rabid fan of IAN SVENONIUS's output since I was a teenager reading about his exploits in the pages of *SASSY* and worshipping the NATION OF ULYSSES and CUPID CAR CLUB I am pleased to have this *Reader's Digest* of CHAIN AND THE GANG before me! Or is it more one of those greatest hits records where the artist had to rerecord all their songs because they don't own the masters? At any rate these artifacts are a ferocious representation of the CHAIN AND THE GANG oeuvre over the years. I was disappointed that the anthem "Experimental Music" is not on here, but you can watch the video on your device whilst listening to this disc for a total multi-sound stimulation adventure. The graphics are a delight, making me think of numerous out there psyche soul records I barely even know exist. This record contains all the important directives of the CHAIN—"Certain Kinds of Trash," "Devitalize," "The Logic of Night," "What is a Dollar"—and some newly recorded missives. ANNA NASTY's vocal presence brings the sound home in a magnificent manner. There is no reason for you not to enjoy these primitive pleasures! Digestible and disgusting! (LG)
(In the Red)

THE CLEOPATRAS – "Cleo Power" CD

Unapologetic rock'n'roll girliness from these Italian babes. Pop take on RAMONES and the CRAMPS, like an Italian SHONEN KNIFE with a bit more musical chops. It's fine, it's charming, but mind-blowing? Nah. (CR)
(Ammonia)

CONCRETE CRIMINALS – "Coping Mechanism" EP

This is pretty straightforward punk in an Orange County or Nardcore way: fast power chord riffs, screaming about work, the pointlessness of life and skateboarding, gang backup vocals, and mosh breakdowns. References to SUICIDAL or JFA might be more skate related than anything else, due to these songs being all up-tempo, the sound in general having more of a '90s feel, and the fact that this record doesn't quite have the songwriting or musicianship that made those bands into classics. On the plus side, "Coping Mechanism" is a really good skating pun. On the down side, "*Don't bail like a bitch*" is a really shitty lyric. (PA)
(Not Like You)

MARK CONE – "Now Showing" LP

MARK CONE sounds anxious and panicky, backed by a frantic keyboard. The sound is discombobulating and strange. The photo on the front cover has him gritting his teeth. There is so much tension, it's palatable. The result is some wild music. It sounds great. MARK CONE is the alter ego of Jackie McDermott of UROCHROMES and SEDIMENT CLUB. (CK)
(Neck Chop)

THE DALEKS – "OK" EP

This is a great little artifact of DIY punk history. The PISTOLS provided the spark, the DESPERATE BICYCLES put out the instruction manual, and snotty leather-jacketed herberts around the suburbs heeded the call. These kids would probably be classed as bandwagon jumpers by the original punks that had already moved on to become Blitz kids or soul boys by the time this came out in 1980. The DALEKS nonetheless managed to release three decent memorable scruffy punk tunes before fading to obscurity. The standout track is "This Life," a lyrical cousin to the MEMBERS's "Solitary Confinement" and the JAM's "In The City." The cut-n-paste graphics of pictures evoke phantom memories of Anytown, UK in 1979 and the sleeve even lists the phone numbers and prices for the studio, printers, pressing plants, etc. used. I don't know if it was easy but it was certainly cheap back then. Not essential by any means, but a neat document of an era. (AM)
(Breakout)

DAWN – "There is No Reason Why" 10"

At first you might think these Japanese maniacs are creating a MY BLOODY VALENTINE style shoegaze noise-pop with a punk rock edge. But then you might think this is the direct result of splicing together JAWBREAKER and HUSKER DU. Both of these styles are used interchangeably (and sometimes simultaneously). It's a weird mix that makes it pop sounding, but not pop punk sounding. Far out and really cool stuff. Recommended. (FS)
(Debauch Mood)

DEAD ON THE WIRE – "Lonely Hearts" EP

One song's vocals sounded like a Joey Ramone impression. Another sounded like a Jello Biafra impression. By the third entirely different

vocal style, I realized the guys were all switching off. Or, I may have been duped, and the singer just does a lot of voices. Either way, there are a lot of moving pieces to this group of San Diego dudes, and it all makes for a punky power poppy stew that smells like SoCal skater jogging music. "Bombay Beach" is the "I want to see someone flail around on stage to this" standout track. (RH)
(No Front Teeth)

DESTINATION LONELY – "Death Of An Angel" CD
DESTINATION LONELY is from Bordeaux, France. They play jangly, modern garage rock. Ten songs of pulsing rhythms, reverb drenched guitars and laid-back, emotive vocals. There are some interesting parts, but mostly it's just blah. I wish the tunes were catchier. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

DIRTY BIRDS – "Psycho Surfer Don't Wanna Die" CD
Rootsy psychobilly from from France. This band seems to have two types of songs: straight rockabilly like STRAY CATS or the POLECATS and a punkier sound with traditional rock drumming and bass in the style of early RAMONES. This is OK—nothing is done poorly but nothing blows me away. (RL)
(Be Fast!!!)

DISSEKERAD – "IV" EP
Four mid-paced Scandi D-beat stompers. Walls of guitars are nice, and the throat searing vox stand at the brink of giving up the ghost from the first shout. Bits of UK82 creep into the mix at times (makes sense), but I'll take the fastest track "Känn Ingenting" if it's all the same to you. Nothing new here, I suppose, but I happen to like pounding my fist against the sky to new interpretations of the same old shit—that's why I'm into punk. (WN)
(Phobia)

DRASTIC ACTIONS – "Some Things Never Change" EP
On first listen, I was like, "What fucking year do these guys think it is?" The lyrics talk about being twenty-five years since 1976, MTV ruining our scene, and punx and skins locked in eternal battle. Turns out this a reissue of a self-released EP from 2004 that you may have missed or not been born for. It's a tasteful mix of LARS FREDERIKSEN-style poppy Oi! and a drunken take on MINOR THREAT or BAD RELIGION-style positive hardcore. Maybe they're named after the latter band's 1981 hit? It's funny how in hindsight that these were the styles of music that actually did threaten the punkers with rampant commercialization and homogenization of the scene. "Steel Toe Boots" is about as good as it gets here and that's not very good. A safe record you can play for your little sister when she starts to cuss and is thinking about smoking. (RO)
(Crowd Control Media)

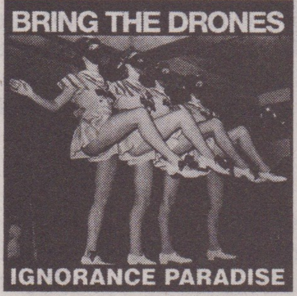
DRONEZ / HUMANMANIA – split EP
A double dose of some disgusting D-beat noise from the East Coast. Philly's DRONEZ play filthy D-beat crust in the vein of DISRUPT. The non-stop ferocity and extra vocal reverberation work for me! Baltimore's HUMANMANIA have even more echo effect on their vocals. They also set the wah-wah pedal to piercing highs, and leave it on for their entire side—I gotta give them props for that! If you hate music fucking up your punk, check this out. (BA)
(Ryvvolte)

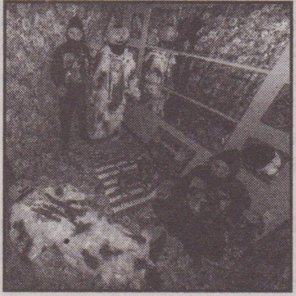
ENZYME – "Abuse of Power" EP
Five brain-melting tracks of hardcore fury from a crew of Aussie lifers. This looks and sounds amazing, with classic SVK-influenced collage art gracing the sleeve and a massive live-sounding recording that showcases the band to their best advantage. Their sound is drawn from both noize-punk and chaotic crust, with the bass leading the band and supported by hectic but never too-busy drumming, piss-raw buzzing guitars, and deep, intense vocals. The first four tracks fly by at high speed, while the record-closing "Hollow" slows down to a CHAOS UK-style stomping tempo with tons of killer tom work. Fuck, all you gotta do is look at who put this out and you know it's got to be quality. (AU)
(Crust War / Hardcore Victim)

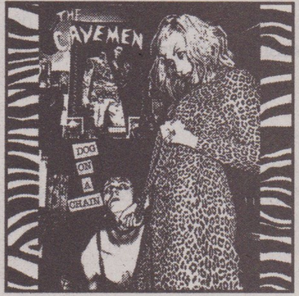
THEE EVIL TWIN – "Back In the Alley / Let's Go Out"
"This hot rockin' new Australian band features former *MRR* radio personality Adam "Howlin Hot Dog" Caine (RADIO REELERS, SPITES, PAPER BAGS, TRUST FUND BABIES, etc.) on guitar and vocals—for your not so pleasurable listening experience...enjoy!" says the handwritten note included with this 7". If that means something to you (it does to me as I have seen all four of those bands multiple times) you know what this sounds like. It's raucous, rowdy melodic garage-y punk rock. Music for drinking beer and acting like an idiot. Fun stuff. (CK)
(Evil Tone)

EXCESSIVE CRUELTY – 12"
Meat and 'taters hardcore punk. A few standout riffs and gruff vocals with sneering backups, but mostly this one just flies by in a burst of testosterone and a few erratic guitar leads. If you like USHC, then you'll be pleased. (WN)
(Sorry State)

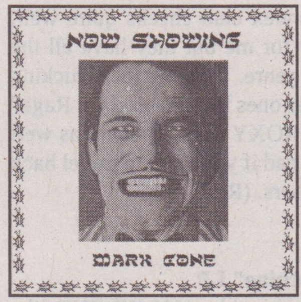
FAST CARS – "The Kids Just Wanna Dance / You're So Funny"
Ground zero for UK power pop, '79 style. Is there anyone among us immune to the charms of "The Kids Just Wanna Dance"? Certainly not anyone attempting power pop in a post-EXPLODING HEARTS world: this is practically branded on every band's collective forehead. Makes sense: itchy / scratchy punk of high standing, yet coated in a sweet pop glaze so as to get groins moist. I'd ignored "You're So Funny" for years, as it's clearly inferior...*but* it's sounding A-OK to me today. It'll never get played

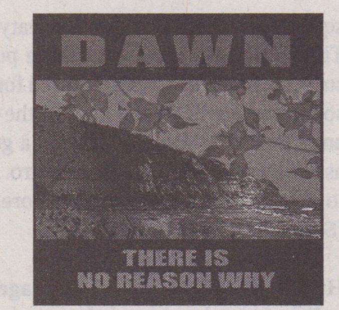


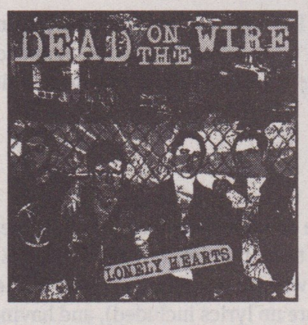




CHAIN AND THE GANG
BEST OF CRIME ROCK







DISSEKERAD

as much as "The Kids…" though. Whatever. Don't yet own this? Now's your chance. (MC)
(Breakout)

THE FATHER FIGURES – "Heavy Lifting" LP

This is apparently the fourth record by this trio of Arizona scene vets (members of JFA, NORTH SIDE KINGS, JEFF DAHL BAND, and more) but it's my first foray into their tuneage. This is mature music made by mature people, ex-hardcore post-punk. Meandering guitar over repetitive, solid bass lines at times brings to mind NOMEANSNO, other times JAWBOX. Tight, dynamic playing and structures recall the later output of other stalwarts of the initial American hardcore explosion: recent MIKE WATT work, FUGAZI, URINALS, and most especially newer MISSION OF BURMA. Not that they are aping those bands, more that they are drawing from similar influences. In fact, you could say that the FATHER FIGURES, together with those I mentioned and others, are carving out a template for what it means to be a hardcore musician in your fifties or sixties and not just either fade away, or milk your past glories. These stalwarts obviously know what they're doing and it shows. (AM)
(Slope)

THE FLAMES – CD

Reissue of the self-released, promo-only 1980 LP with two non-LP rehearsal recordings also from 1980 and ten acoustic songs by the FLAMES's vocalist / guitarist Michael J. Richards recorded between 2009–2013. The story behind the reissue is cute. A guy comes across an interesting looking record at a record store. He buys it. Ends up loving it. Calls the phone number handwritten on the cover and amazingly gets in touch with the main guy in the band thirty-four years after the album was released. That guy, Michael J. Richards, was from Canada, in a '60s band called the ROYAL FAMILY, a '70s prog band TROYKA, and finally the FLAMES. The FLAMES are a super slick disco / power pop hybrid band. The cheesy keyboard sound really gives it that dance club feel. The vocals almost seem like a parody of the sincere pop singer. Some of the lyrics are cringe-worthy. The recent acoustic songs continue in a similar style just without the band and the production. The best song is the lo-fi rehearsal recording of "Let Me Tell You," an ode to cocaine. I can imagine the Burger Records crowd going crazy for this group. (CK)
(Narmer)

FLOWER ZOMBIES – "In The Rain / Don't Get Sober" EP

Take a few of the finer, catchier songs Weird Paul Petrosky has to offer and have some impossible to imagine, oddly competent, sober teenage NOBUNNY cover them while you're drinking your first ever piña colada on the beach while your parents aren't looking. It's catchy as hell, it's clean, it's cute but probably dark (I can't tell, I can't understand what they're saying), and it's pretty fucking fun. Good luck finding it! (DZ)
(Debauch Mood)

FRENCH VANILLA – "Repent the End is Near" CD

Incandescent PYLON guitars slipping through someone's dream sequence where BUSH TETRAS and B-52s 45s are played at the same time…Art school graduates get bored with the rock bro ascendency of the Los Angeles underground music scene and make their own group in defiance. We are all plastic regurgitating what went before, but it makes me much happier to hear people reimagining weird Athens, GA / Manchester, UK art punk pasts than festival cockrock circa 1975! If you get the urge to dance around in clothes you made yourself then here's your summer soundtrack…Cacophonous queer and girl sounds for the bored and ready for more! Recommended! (LG)
(Danger Collective)

FRENZAL RHOMB – "Hi-Vis High Tea" CD

This Australian band for the most part has never been on my radar,. though they have apparently done well enough to "chart" in their homeland. Formed in 1992, this lineup features only one original member, the singer. These guys crank out speedy pop punk in the style of BAD RELIGION and early BLINK 182 and they certainly do it well. Nothing groundbreaking, but I can see why they have been successful. (RL)
(Fat)

FRIED E.M. – "Coping" EP

I've been a bigger fan of the more gnarly hardcore Lumpy releases (NOSFERATU, GLITTER, MYSTIC INANE, etc.) than the arty new wave, and this record doesn't fall limp. I've been listening to this on YouTube for a week (no reviewer copy, Lumps?) and it's rapidly climbing my list of favorite millennial loving / destroying hardcore releases. The vinyl skips the *Network* movie sample and jumps straight into a tough as nails pogo beat (think that may be Lumpo on drums) and rolls into five songs of pure uncut hate. The singer reminds me a lot of a young FRANK DISCUSSION—*this* shoulda been the new FEEDERZ record. Choruses like *"Just another piiiiiggg!"* are the kind of serenades this old punker needs to make it through a day. You might hear elements of VOID and SPIKE IN VAIN as well as the aforementioned Lumpy bands here, but this record can easily stand on its own as a modern classic and an ode to fuckall. (RO)
(Lumpy)

GAY KISS – "Rounded Down" EP

This one is some weirdo hardcore for kids who love to mosh. This Arizona band's got maximum breakdowns, with minimum chugga chug—I'm definitely down with that! I'm also down with the thrashed out nods to classic NYHC, and the noise accents. The cherry on top is the RUDIMENTARY PENI-influenced closer, which wraps this little record up perfectly. A solid release all around! (BA)
(Blast House / Sorry State)

GENDER FLUIDS –"Incorrigible" CD

These guys answer the question "What does slow grindcore sound like?" It's kind of like BOLT THROWER, but it's also kind of like all of

the breakdowns and none of the fun. The little bit of double bass drum just isn't enough…I gotta have that blast, man! No lyrics included, but from the cover art I'm guessing it's some gross out, gore shit. Play fast or die! (BA)
(self-released)

GLAASSSS – "Ben" flexi EP

I hate flexis. I heard someone once say they like them because they represent how nothing lasts forever. I think they're shit. Three-song EP by this Austin, Texas hardcore band with songs about wanting to die, wanting to be cut up (I think— there are no lyrics included), and having a brain full of shit. Perhaps comparable to Austin contemporaries GLUE in the knuckle-dragging, 1-2-1-2 nature of the songs complete with glass-gargling vocals. Very healthy use of floor toms. The opening riff to the second song is rad. I'm kind of sick, however, of bands using gimmicks in the spelling of their boring names, like replacing a w with two v's or spelling out a boring band name like glass with two a's and four s's. This is a little too angsty for my taste. It's not bad though, and if you like bands like GLUE, you'll be eating this up like so many shards of broken glass. (JC)
(I Hate I Skate)

GOD'S AMERICA / SIDETRACKED – split CD

Twenty-seventh release by Tacoma's SIDETRACKED. To call them powerviolence influenced, at least on this recording, is a bit misleading. They take hardcore songs that also include mosh breakdowns and sludgier parts, cut everything into pieces, and then paste the various pieces together in a way that seems random but makes musical sense every time. In contrast to SIDETRACKED's songs, which only once cross the minute mark, GOD'S AMERICA offer up one seven-minute sludgy number that's somehow lethargic and explosive at the same time. The vocalist sounds like some kind of swamp villain rising from the muck, and despite only riding on 3 riffs max, the song is good enough to hold my attention the whole way through. (DG)
(Negative Outlook / Problems They Persist)

HARDWARE – "Demo" EP

Chugging and heavy hardcore that sounds like it might be on the wrong speed and features warped down-tuned bass breakdowns and some eerie and captivating spaced out guitar fades. Dense, depressing, and gnarly while still being super aggressive and, dare I say, fun. Brutal drumming with coarse and strained vocals that are well balanced within the mix. Powerviolence changes with a 100% punk feel, this reminds me of ZERO HOUR, EBOLA, SEPTIC DEATH, and PINK TURDS IN SPACE, and features cool '80s style retro art. (JR)
(Not Like You)

THE HIP PRIESTS – "Those Fuckin' Boys: A Decade Of Disdain" CD

This is a ten-year retrospective of singles and compilation tracks. It seems like the HIP PRIESTS came in late for the whole HELLACOPTERS, GLUCIFER, ANAL BABES, HELLBENDERS late '90s non-Motor City rock'n'roll revival, but they would've squeezed in between those sweaty spandex clad cheeks quite well. The vocal harmonies get a little poppy for me but they have all the strut, swagger and 'tude required for the genre. There's a lot of fucking songs on here (27!) and I prefer the faster ones like "Raised On Rage" and "Black 'N' Blue." They do a good ROXY MUSIC cover as well as lifting a SKREWDRIVER intro. Not bad if you want to travel back to you favorite sweaty dive of yore. Cheers. (RO)
(Self Destructo)

HOLY MONEY – "The Language Machine" LP

Echoing chambers of crust, mixed with HAWKWIND-like psychedelics. So fucking cool. Dual vocals—one a furnace of gargling ferocity, while the other might be a feral cat or infant who severely needs a nap. It reminds me of DAMAD or GRAVES AT SEA, yet even witchier than that. HOLY MONEY are scaring me and reviving some really great vibes from the '90s crust era. Sick production and musicianship. (JR)
(Anthems of the Undesirable)

JOINT D≠ – "مخابرات / Intelligence" LP

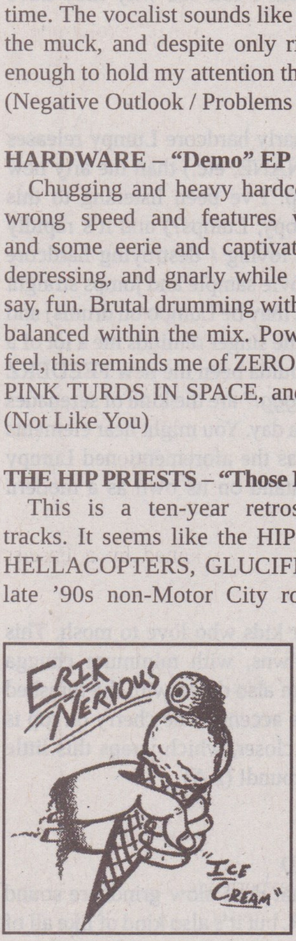
JOINT D≠ have outdone themselves with a fully realized LP that listens like a journey to outrun a world on fire. There is a desperation present in these people's music that goes all the way back to their time in LOGIC PROBLEM and transcends whatever sound they're doing at a given time. On this record, whether they're playing frantic hardcore, SST catalog-influenced stuff, the well-placed instrumental track that rides on two riffs, or the grooving "M.I.A. / Intelligence" that has vocal patterns that are reminiscent of both VIOLENT FEMMES and the OBSERVERS (?!), every single song listens like an essential piece of the story unfolding. I get the impression that this is a concept album and that the lyrics are in fact telling a story, and they are exceptionally well-matched by the music. If you've seen this band's name around for years but never given them a chance, now is the time. (DG)
(Sorry State)

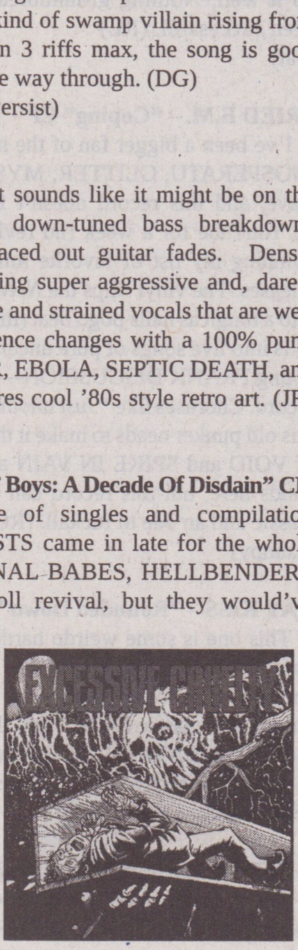
LATTERDAY DAY SKANKS – "Devilishly Dirty" CD

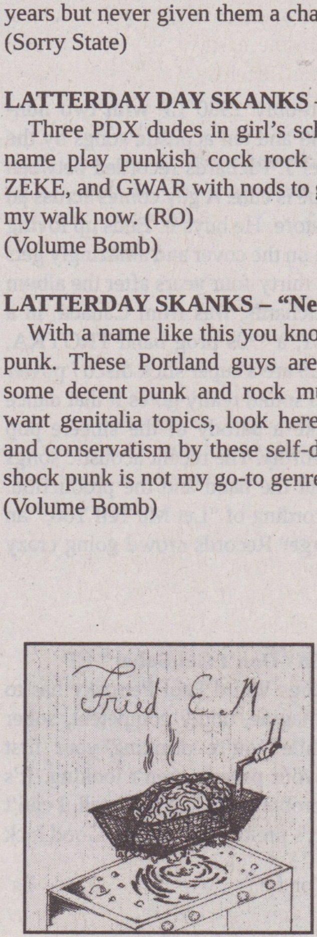
Three PDX dudes in girl's school uniforms with an offensive band name play punkish cock rock along the lines of the GRANNIES, ZEKE, and GWAR with nods to gender politics and incest. It's time for my walk now. (RO)
(Volume Bomb)

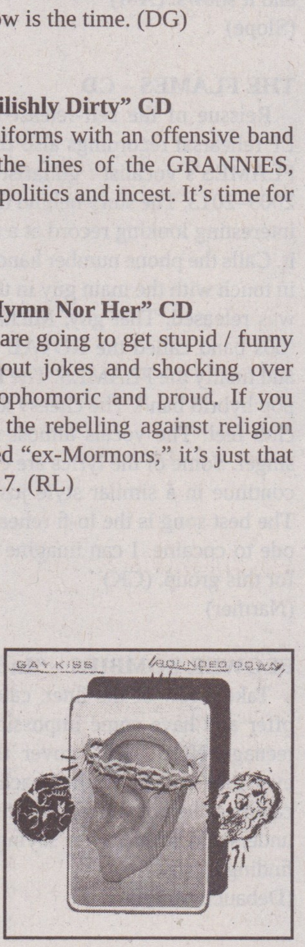
LATTERDAY SKANKS – "Neither Hymn Nor Her" CD

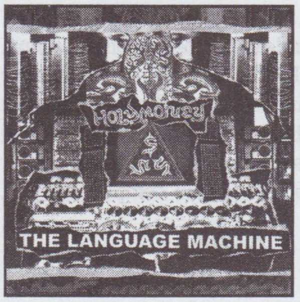
With a name like this you know you are going to get stupid / funny punk. These Portland guys are all about jokes and shocking over some decent punk and rock music. Sophomoric and proud. If you want genitalia topics, look here. I get the rebelling against religion and conservatism by these self-described "ex-Mormons," it's just that shock punk is not my go-to genre in 2017. (RL)
(Volume Bomb)











RECLAMATION OF LIFE
RECLAMATION OF FREEDOM
humanmania

LEBENDEN TOTEN
STATIC! STATIC!

LEBENDEN TOTEN – "Static!" 12"

The vinyl return of Portland's noize gods is typically over the top in music and packaging, a twelve-minute opus in two parts on a one-sided etched 12". LEBENDEN TOTEN crank through seven or eight minutes of mid-tempo swirling guitar feedback and synth like a broken funhouse organ before launching into a DISORDER-style sonic avalanche. Exultant pogo. Pure noize bliss. We are all so lucky to be alive at the same time as them. (SW)
(Iron Lung)

LIFE'S BLOOD – "Hardcore A.D. 1988" LP

NYC's top shit-stirrers of 1988 finally get the reissue treatment, some half a decade (maybe more? I stopped counting) after this release was first announced. LIFE'S BLOOD didn't fit into the dominant NYHC paradigms of the time. Too thoughtful and sarcastic for the BREAKDOWN et al. side of the scene, and too grounded for the lofty platitudes of youth crew, they only existed for about a year, playing 22 shows and recording a demo, EP, split 7" with STICKS AND STONES, two radio sets, and a handful of comp tracks, all collected here. Guitarist Adam Nathanson and bassist Neil Burke (both later of BORN AGAINST) compiled every flyer and tons of photos into a nice document, with liner notes that capture the ecstasy of youth culture in late 1980s NYC: graffiti, riots, Some Records, violence at shows, Raybeez, DJ Scott La Rock, and posh private school dorms all make an appearance. LIFE'S BLOOD is my favorite NYHC band, and one of my all-time favorite bands period, but I would be remiss not to mention that singer Jason O'Toole is now a cop and a right-wing troll. A crucial discography if you can overlook that. (SW)
(Prank)

LIPUPS – "D Start" EP

Japanese garage, fully wet with reverb and distortion. Guitar vacillates from sparse and off-kilter to full blown killer melodic riffs. Reminiscent of Memphis rockers NOTS and MANATEEES. "D Start," "Out Party," and "Wire Plants" are blown-out rapidfire thrash garage tunes that at times traverse into oblivion. Rips. (CR)
(Debauch Mood)

LITTER BUG – "Your Perception Is Not My Reality" LP

Snotty, catchy, and cliché pop-punk from England. They play somewhere in between the DESCENDENTS and ANGRY SAMOANS styles of punk rock. It's not necessarily cliché in a derogatory way, but in the sense where they clearly make no effort to be different. These are simple songs that follow the barre chord and lyrical path many have traveled before. Generally you can make two assumptions about bands like this: either the band members are very young, or live in a small town. Sometimes it's both. But when you really get down to it, the well-worn paths are taken for a reason. The classic sounding punk rock is really fun to play and listen to (if you aren't old and jaded). If you fancy yourself as a punk rock aficionado you'll be bored with this. And if you fancy yourself as a Photoshop (or font) aficionado you will be truly horrified by the back cover. But if you just wanna listen to some classic sounding punk and rock out, this may do the trick. (FS)
(Just Say No To Government Music)

MAD SIN – "Chills and Thrills In A Drama Of Mad Sins and Mystery / Distorted Dimensions" 2xCD

I can't profess to being incredibly knowledgeable when it comes to Euro psychobilly but I saw the GUANA BATZ many, many years ago and I *haaaaaate* the STRAY CATS. Psychobilly at its best is mixture of 1950s American JD fetish, punk, Appalachian hillbilly hoedown, goth and in more recent years metal and industrial. It is also a well-known vacation spot for RAC and straight-up Nazi musicians. MAD SIN doesn't have any of these affiliations as far as I know and is well-known as one of the founding bands of the genre. This is their first two records packaged together. I prefer the first (*Chills and Thrills*), for its rawer and more primitive sound. Both are good though. I don't think I would listen to them extensively but you can't help but be charmed by the jumping stand-up bass driven rhythms and goofy German accents. There's the typical ghouls, girls, and hot rods lyrics along with several references to their love of LSD which I find novel and refreshing. So charge up your pompadour, grab your Bettie, and jump on the graveyard acid-laden hellbound hayride to Hamburg. Ugh. (RO)
(Concrete Jungle)

MAGNUM FORCE – "2009–2016" LP

Guttural grind violence retrospective, featuring a few demos and a few vinyl releases spanning this band's brutal existence. Leaning on the grind end of West Bay / Doomryderz shits, complete with mindfuckingly distorted / compressed guitars and multiple harsh vocals that sometimes seem to come from all directions. MAGNUM FORCE are dark, MAGNUM FORCE most certainly do not give a fuck what I think, and if you like your sound mean and raw? Then MAGNUM FORCE is (was?) ready for you. (WN)
(Push Wait / To Live a Lie)

MALA LECHE – "Pantallas" EP

This little piece of vinyl collects both of this St. Louis band's self-released demo tapes in one place. This is essential listening. Heavy synth and processed, nearly robotic drumming combine with truly unhinged vocals to create a mutated punk screech that will make you wanna run through the streets while strangling every boring norm in your path. Eat shit. (GH)
(Lumpy)

MENTAL ABORTION – "Infinite Cum" flexi

Fifty-two "song" mince / porno / noisecore flexi. Yawn. (WN)
(Breathing Problem Productions)

MUDSEX – "Remedial Vacation Bible School Gang Bang" CD

Okay, so I'm just gonna refrain from reading the lyrics to this one because they're printed in a microscopic font with one of the shittiest print jobs I've seen in years. *Plus*, my past experience with this band lets me know that they're the kind of dudes who are setting out to offend my

PC sensibilities, but will just end up with an eye roll. MUDSEX (who are from Chattanooga, TN and Dalton, GA) play ignorant, full-tilt, full-throttle, drunken punk with a nod towards GG ALLIN, BLACK FLAG and ANTISEEN. Most of the vocals are done gang-style and over the top. This full length is mostly re-recordings from their demo and EP, but done a little bit better. (GH)
(WereOpossum)

NATURAL CAUSES – LP

Sophomore 12" from this thoroughly modern North Carolina band. Puzzler punks for sure, with an attack that's varied and keeps you guessing. There's post-punk with nowadays-urgency, oddball synth meandering, and some totally distinct FALL appropriations that just throw me for a loop. Moreover, the actual punk here is quite savage and winning, dark in a way that recalls GG KING, but gazing inward rather than lashin' out. There's really no duff moments to he heard here. How often do you visit a buffet and every item rules? Neat and cool. (MC)
(Sorry State)

ERIK NERVOUS – "Ice Cream / Children Stabbing Things"

Ice cream is delicious and so is this delightful taste of weirdo Kalamazoo solo punk art. The title track begins with an almost child-like melody before devolving into a psychotic tantrum. The B-side is more of a straightforward punk song at the ramshackle intersection of CRASS and BLITZ with barked, regimental vocals. (AM)
(Total Punk)

THE 99ERS – "Pop Punk Girl" CD

I couldn't get through song two. There simply was no need to. Pop punk lite. All filler no killer. (CR)
(RTTB / Spinout)

Отдел Самоискоренения – "Антивсё: Полное Досье 1981-1984" CD

Amazing raw, passionate, anarchic punk from early '80s Russia. Really powerful and eternal sounding, true experimental wildness, adventurous and devastating. Though they evoke a lot of English post-punk sounds of the time (think PIL, the POP GROUP), this band truly doesn't sound like anything but themselves. Strange dub excursions, wild ferocious punk anthems, spacious and wild and fucked up and free! I don't speak Russian but you can tell that they are laughing as they are saying fuck you. The music has a joyous and raucous feeling that almost reminds me of listening to SWELL MAPS, but the lyrics of this band got them shut down by the secret police before they played a single show. Imagine making music like this under the watch of the KGB, having to make your insane genius anarchic music and then having to answer for lyrical content and not being able to play live for the entire existence of your band? When I got assigned this I wished someone else had got it, someone who could authoritatively write a history of the band based on their vast knowledge of Eastern European and Commie punk, but fuck that! This rules. Two discs of true insurrection. (LG)
(Издательство Сияние)

PERVERTS AGAIN – "My Accident / My Embarrassment"

Total Punk Records is committed to releasing nothing but plodding, primitive punk, and this new 45 from PERVERTS AGAIN is exactly that. Two pounding tracks of self-abasement and humiliation. This isn't quite as moronically simplistic as LIFE STINKS, but it's right along the same track. If you like simple beats and lyrics about being a loser and dying, but also find most garage rock songs too complex for you, this is the one. (LP)
(Total Punk)

PIECE WAR – "Apathy" LP

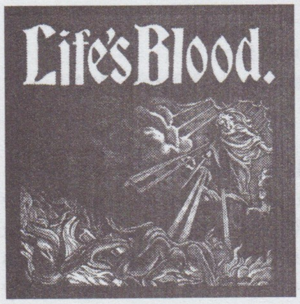
I discovered this band at the tail end of 2014 and by the time I did their limited-to-thirty 10" lathe cut had sold out, probably exclusively to their friends in New Zealand. I was left alone and annoyed with the MP3s that I played incessantly to all my friends. And now finally, one of those friends has reissued this record! It's just so good. Wild secret evocative sounds that feel doomed and liberatory at the same time. Sometimes the guitars make me think of GREG SAGE or KEVIN SHIELDS, but even then it's so clear that as a band they are in their very own realm! No masters! It is such a sick record, just the wild wash of guitars and drums; it makes me think of being a teenager and listening to EXCUSE 17 and RITES OF SPRING and LYNC. It doesn't sound like those bands, though, just true passion and power! There are chanting vocals in places and sung incantations that feel sorta grrrl style alongside some Xpressway / SANDRA BELL-style strangeness, but PIECE WAR inhabit a space that is wholly their own. Happy to finally have this in my hands. It's worth investigation, I promise! (LG)
(Square One Again)

PIG//CONTROL – "Vor den Mauern" LP

More ferocity from Germany's PIG//CONTROL. Massive sounding bursts of ultra intense hardcore tempered with just enough start / stop (like the riffing in "Der Fiend" which fukkn *kills* me) and guitars that are like a freak show in the background...until they take the lead. When that happens, all bets are off. True damage, an aural collision coming from all sides...and then they drop back into hardcore before you know what hits you. The stomps are here ("Das Licht") and the rage is here (pretty much the rest of the record) and they never let up. B-side is taken up by one looong mid-paced noisy number that's so well crafted that you hardly even notice that it takes up the whole side, *and* the the art is disorienting and perfect. Excellent release. (WN)
(Sabotage)

PISSING MATCH – "Break the Seal" EP

East Coast tough guy hardcore that seem to pride themselves on extremely short songs. Song lengths are included along with song lyrics, with most around 15–30 seconds. Fifteen songs of various themes like being about to snap, hating fashion scenes, not giving a fuck, not being afraid of a big man with a gun, people being full of shit, and so forth. This guy even hates "*atheist evangelists*" who "*preach to a godless choir*" and "*useful scapegoats*" who are "*black hooded agitators*," suggesting that left-wing, educated activists might actually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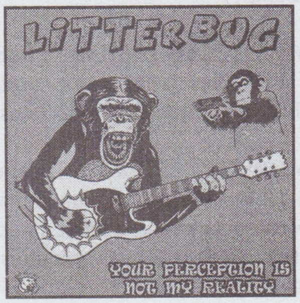
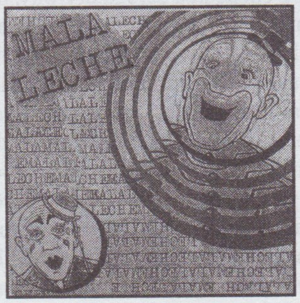
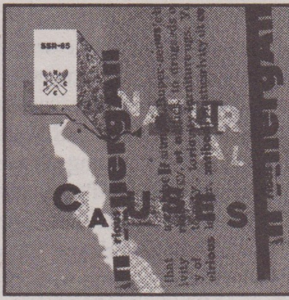
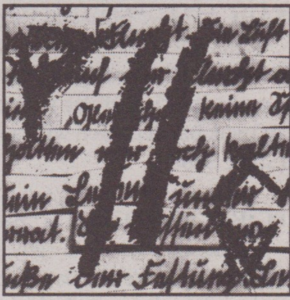

LITTERBUG
YOUR PERCEPTION IS NOT MY REALITY



MENTAL ABORTION
INFINITE CUM



PERVERTS AGAIN
My Accident
b/w "My Embarrassment"



get something done if they weren't busy throwing rocks at cops. Maybe this guy is a cop. (JC)
(Feral Kid / self-released)

POPULATION ZERO – "Death Pact" LP
Straight up blackened crust outta Philadelphia that definitely hews closer to the metal side of their pedigree, though they pull off some pretty sick AGNOSTIC FRONT-ish gang vocals that keep things rooted in hardcore. This record recalls bands like MALEFACTION and SUICIDE NATION, though there's more crust influence in the POPULATION ZERO sound than either of those groups. The screechy black metal vocals (which are often more irritating than endearing) work surprisingly well here, while the noodle-y metal solos are a bit too over-the-top and sound out of place, except on the well-executed OBITUARY cover. If you like your metal to come with a heaping spoonful of crust and a DIY-as-fuck attitude, this is definitely your jam. (AU)
(This Fucking City)

PROCESS OF ELIMINATION – "Won't Comply" EP
Solo electronic punk messiness. Paper thin guitars. Brutally shitty drum synth. Funky bass keys. Space synths sawing through it all. Harsh vocals. Sometimes the vocals dissolve completely into computer static vomit, going so low resolution that all words or humanity is lost. I guess you could call this garage but it's really just thumping digital punk shittiness. The future blows but this record rules. (LP)
(Neck Chop)

PSYCHIC TEENS – "Hex" CD
Interesting mix of '80s deathrock and '90s alternative grunge. The music reminds me of the CHAMELEONS, though the vocals remind of me MOTHER LOVE BONE and the CHURCH with a cold. The lyrics seem freestyled, but fuck it, sounds like a cluttered mind. I especially enjoyed the track "Emily," a smooth shoegazing track from before that term was coined. Quite a catchy album with moments of power electronics but overall easy and melancholy. Live, I'd probably fall asleep, but that's not what we are talking about here. (JR)
(self-released)

PUKE SPIT AND GUTS – "Eat Hot Lead" LP
Welp, here 'tis: a completely absurd reissue of one of the most moronic punk piss-takes existent. *Eat Hot Lead* is the lone bizzaro-offendo offering from biker pukes turned punks, PUKE SPIT AND GUTS, a record that's topped Fake Punk obsessive want-lists forever, it seems. Testimonials from goons like JELLO and ROLLINS have served to build a minor legend here, but the true meat of the matter is the comedic look and sound of the album itself, which really can't be dismissed as quickly as you straight-lacers would like. PUKE SPIT AND GUTS's truly fucked approach seeks to disgust and offend at every available opportunity. They went for it: Indiscriminate hatred (queers, squares, women, cops, punks, teachers, artists) abounds...no one is safe. As a Fake Punk novelty record, rivals like CHRIST CHILD and ROKKER may have more hits, but they never sink to the lows that PUKE SPIT AND GUTS aim for, which is what makes *Eat Hot Lead* appealing. Case in point: "You Ain't Never," Marie Manslaughter's cautionary tale against anal sex...impossible to forget, yet so awful that it becomes astounding. There are other moments I'll let newbies discover on their own, but assholes with shit for brains once again have a new *Sgt. Pepper* to jizz over. Buyin' one for my dad. (MC)
(Black Gladiator / Slovenly)

RICHIE RAMONE – "I Fix This / Pretty Poison"
I can't believe I'm about to say this, but I think I actually like this. Don't get me wrong, I'm a RAMONES loving maniac, but the band's former members kinda put out a lot of garbage outside of their real job (I mean, except for King Dee Dee...duh). Sure, Richie hasn't ventured miles away from his three chord roots, but it seems like he took a pleasant stroll a few steps out and that's really all I ask. His crooning slips into a pretty fucking pleasant growl, and god damnit, this first song is actually a banger! I'm still too scared to check out the rest of his stuff, though. (DZ)
(Outro)

RAXOLA – "Guts Out" CD
RAXOLA formed in 1977 and put out their first LP in 1978 in Belgium. I've never heard it. I'm always wary of old punk bands who reform and put out new albums. This album is exactly why I have these fears. Bad rock riffs, cringe-worthy lyrics, crisp production values that sound stale and no bite whatsoever. Woof. (GH)
(self-released)

THE RIPPERS – "A Gut Feeling" LP
THE RIPPERS are '60s style garage rock from Italy who have been around since the beginning of the century. They also employ some garage rock moderne stylings in their tunes. The music is smooth and jangly. The singer has a bit of a bratty quality to his style. He doesn't sings as much as he whines. It's all well done. (CK)
(Slovenly)

SADIST – "Beauty Fades" EP
SADIST are a band that are most loved for their elaborate, stagey live performances, the essence of which hasn't really been captured on their earlier recordings. This EP is definitely their best studio effort to date, with an expansive, echo-y recording that captures some of the eerie atmosphere they are capable of creating. The music is very straightforward, mid-tempo heavy hardcore, driven by the charismatic vocals and frequently overlaid with noise effects. "(You Have) Complete Control" is the most memorable song they've written, with the record-closing "Climb" as a close second. Nice to see SADIST continuing to improve—it will be interesting to see what they can do with their next release. Great graphic design as well, except for the super goofy band photo on the back cover, which definitely diminishes the threatening vibe they're cultivating. (AU)
(Hardcore Victim)

SARCASM – "Malarial Bog" EP

Minimalist but driving post-punk from London. It's like if the guys from S.H.I.T were trying to play music that sounded like HYGIENE. Angular musical styles with chanted lyrics. Very reminiscent of 1979 art punk but delivered with a raw urgency. Very cool stuff! (FS)
(Static Shock)

SCIENCE PROJECT – "Basement Blues" EP

Canadian freakazoid (guy from BOOJI BOYS, I hear) on a synth odyssey in his wee lil' basement. Herk? Jerk? Uh huh. It's as if humanity and punk both stopped after that last Rhino Records new wave comp, a mode in which there currently are far too many operators workin' today, all of which cause commotion among the youth, but leave us fatty seniors lukewarm at best. There's six tunes on here, but it feels like a billion, yet I can't remember any after the spinnin' stops. Not shit, but far from thee shit. (MC)
(Neck Chop)

THE SHAKEN GROWLERS – CD

If this were 1997, the SHAKEN GROWLERS might have had a flamin' shot (flamin' dice, that is) at making a name for themselves in Orange County. This sounds like how a decal on a back windshield that says "ROCK'N'ROLL" looks, and the singer sounds like he's auditioning for the BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY biopic. Even if I liked this, I'd be suspicious of them going on to be in a movie soundtrack or something. (DG)
(Green Monkey)

SHIT BLIMP – "Good-Natured Friends of the Scene" EP

I went into this review really wanting to like a band named SHIT BLIMP. This is frantic and ferocious Cleveland hardcore not unlike 9 SHOCKS TERROR and GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS. Somewhat nonsensical lyrics that come across more as just wild ramblings. Ten songs, which is quite the bang for your buck. Childish drawing of none other than a blimp shitting on the center label. SHIT BLIMP is Nick, Sam, and water bottle apparently. This description is on their bandcamp: "It's the sound of a papercut to the devil's dick." I'd have to concur. (JC)
(Ryan's Tasteful Nudes / Shit Blimp Inc.)

SICK THOUGHTS – "Songs About People You Hate" LP

Recent offerings from alter ego DD OWEN, while far from tame, seemed to hint at acceptance and maturity, but his main outlet SICK THOUGHTS' new LP *Songs About People You Hate* dashes those hopes instantaneously. Yes, the hell-child's return brings nihilism roaring back, perhaps more chilling now that he's (presumably) of an age where he should've worked this shit out by now. *But*…"Wasting My Youth" and "Young And Suicidal" gnash wild as all get-out, confirming that person inspiring the hatred on this collection is actually himself. Can't wait for the jazz album. Oh yeah: comes with not one but two pin-ups, thus cementing teen-dream status. (MC)
(Neck Chop)

SIEVEHEAD – "Worthless Soul" LP

SIEVEHEAD seems to be a pretty rare bird in the world of DIY punk as they don't fall easily into any specific subcategories. Calling them post-punk would not be wrong, but that tag is reserved by many nowadays to describe something "gothy," which SIEVEHEAD is not. What they are is intense, soulful, dramatic, and enchanting. Those looking for a quick fix or instant satisfaction probably won't get that here, as this album is best taken in as a whole (but check out their excellent EP). Things actually start out slow and they work you for a few songs before rocking your socks off, which didn't agree with me the first two times I listened (but I came around by the third). They've got a very distinct sound, mostly defined by the spring reverbed-guitar twang and howling / crooning vocals, bringing GUN CLUB to mind. It's a "mature" sound. I know that sounds stupid but I mean to convey the weight of it all. Subdued moments give the album space, and the fastest parts nearly match the speed of hardcore but conjure a totally different feel. Urban decay-style art is tired but the dark yellow bubble used here feels fresh and creates an ominous feel that complements the music. Really cool record overall and I hope I get to see this band someday. (MA)
(Static Shock)

SKELETON – "Locked Up" flexi

Another butt-quality flimsy flexi disc on the market, so set your counterweight accordingly. A stark and minimal sleeve matches the simple and stomping HELLHAMMER-like assault purveyed by these Texans. I mean, all three songs are crushing and groovy but how do we get these flexi presses shut back down? (MA)
(I Hate I Skate / Super Secret)

SKEMÄTA – "A Bright Shining Hell" 12"

Solid but unspectacular D-beat hardcore from these North Carolina punx. The vocals are a definite highlight, throat-y and super pissed, and the bass player writes some interesting parts too. The band are at their best on "Justice for All," the longest track, which gives the band the opportunity to stretch out, throw down some crazy Ginn-influenced guitar solos, and finish up with a killer breakdown. The shorter most straightforward songs are solid, but a bit too by-the-numbers, lacking the hooks necessary to make the songs really memorable, though "Project Paperclip" stands out with its MOTÖRHEAD-influenced guitar hooks. This could have been a very impressive four or five song EP—when this band is on, they're excellent—but there are too many tracks that don't stand out to make this a quality 12". (AU)
(Sorry State)

SKEPTICS – LP

Here we get nine songs of super fuzzed-out '60s / early '70s-inspired punker jams from a French band that's new to me. Fuzz is the key here, saving this record from the heaping pile of striped, paisley, pointy booted dog feces. The vocals, drums and songwriting are nothing to get off the floor for, but when the guitar jumps into mega fuzzed-out doom overload mode on certain songs like "Cloud Mountain," this dirthead

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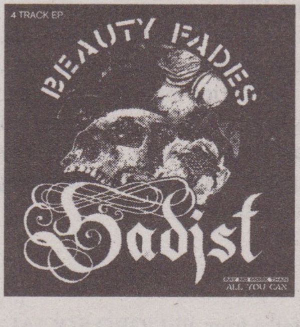
PROCESS
OF
ELIMINATION

EAT HOT LEAD
Puke Spit and Guts



SARCASM
MALARIAL BOG
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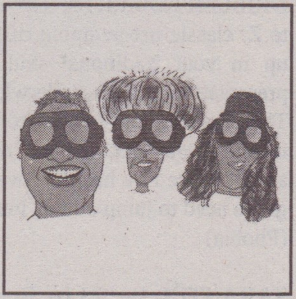


is listening. It's like a STOOGES / SAINT VITUS / SEEDS triple S attack that I wish was more prevalent throughout. A much stronger vocalist and drums that pound like a mutha are needed badly. Still, it's definitely not a lost cause and worth a spin for sure. (RO)
(Beast / Juvenile Delinquent)

THE SKIDS – "Crooked Cop" EP

I'm a big fan of the Aussie hard rock / punk / pub rock...whatever thing happening these days with bands like POWER, MISS DESTINY, WHIPPER, and NO CLASS and this band is no exception. Rocking primitive drums, a Chuck Berry lick or two, and gruff monotone vocals that almost border on ANTISEEN or 4-SKINS brutality. I'm trying to pick a winner here but pretty much every song slays with equal power and precision. It you like Oi!, glam, heavy metal, or just plain dirtheaded good time rock'n'roll then the SKIDS are your new favorite band. (RO)
(Shipping Steel)

SLAM – "Wild Riders Of Boards / Wild Riders [Of Boards]"

This single includes one version of the Swedish skate punk band's song from the 1985 Thrasher Magazine compilation, *Skate Rock 3 – Wild Riders of Boards*, and one from their 1987 full-length, *End of Laughter*. The compilation version is dirty, loud, and intimidating. The album version is so produced it sounds like it's flirting with hair metal for a space on MTV. If you're a skate punk historian, you'll definitely want this. If you're anyone else, I think you can find other things you need in your life a lot more. (RH)
(Not Like You)

THE SLEEPING AIDES AND RAZOR BLADES – "Favorite Synthetic" CD

Motherfuckers over at Debauch Mood are totally killin' me this month. While some of this band's other recordings sound just like you'd expect, seeing as how they snatched their name from an EXPLODING HEARTS song title, this here is some stoney, trippy, dreamy, bedroom indie pop. Sure, you can tell they have some power pop chops, but this shit is pretty tender. I'm pretty sure this is a full on band, but it sure sounds like some sweet pop maniac in his parent's basement. I mean that as a compliment. I like this a lot. (DZ)
(Debauch Mood)

SMD – "Born Against" LP

These fools have been rolling for 20 plus years and I swear they just get more sinister as they get older. Unhinged and manic thrash / punk that sounds like every member is trying to play faster than every other member. *Feel Like Shit*-era SUICIDAL meets LÄRM with lyrics that are pissed, determined, and shaped by a fukkn lifetime of living this shit. I figured it was gonna be good....I was right. (WN)
(King of Drunk / Los Angeles Recordings / Morbid Reality / Poor Kids)

THE SNAILS – "Demos" EP

This record collects two cassette releases by the SNAILS, who play instantly catchy hardcore and punk in the vein of Midwestern basement fuck ups and classic shits off of a *KBD* comp. My only complaint isthat "Clones" sounds like they were just trying to rip off CONEHEADS—but that's a small complaint. Otherwise, this EP is perfectly slammin'. (GH)
(Neck Chop)

SUBSTANCE – "The Fight For Identity" EP

Blown-out, knuckle-dragging hardcore from Houston. The vocals are a deep, barked cackle that can be difficult to hear over the thick, abrasive guitars, but it makes for a cool sound. The songs vary in tempo, including songs that are stompy, dirgey, and use a 1-2-1-2 beat, which makes each stand out and breaks up any would-be monotony. Good stuff. (DG)
(Demand A Future)

SUBVERSIVE RITE – "The Demos" 12"

This bare-bones 12" collects nine tracks from (shocker) SUBVERSIVE RITE's first two demo tapes. They've got a strong late '80s proto D-beat vibe, recalling bands like SACRILEGE (both the UK and NYC bands), A.O.A., and REVULSION. Their hot-shit guitar player is a huge asset, as he's got a great feel for writing riffs and solos in this style. Claire's strong, clear vocals are a strength as well, giving the band a unique feel that helps them stand out from the glut of modern D-beat practitioners. The stripped-down recording contributes to the throwback feel of the band—it sounds vintage in the best possible way, warm and slightly hissy like it was recorded on tape. The cool, minimalist artwork is another big plus. This is a great record that looks killer. Highly recommended, and I can't wait to hear what this band does next. (AU)
(Bloody Master)

THE SUSSED – "The Chesterfield Years" 10"

The SUSSED were tearing it up during the '90s East Coast street rock revival that their hometown of Iron City was smack dab in the middle of. The recording on this 10" never came out while they were a band. More on the '77 punker side than the spirit of '79 in sound, they'd be able to share a bill equally with the STITCHES in their prime or at a pints in the air, baldheaded bash with, say, OXBLOOD. The two excellent choices for cover songs, the DAMNED's "Born To Kill" and EATER's "No Brains," give a perfect reference to what to expect from the rest of this mess. Lyrics tend toward the introspective, like on "Romper Stomper," an anti-fighting song: "*When will you learn / that one day these sides are going to be turned / when you're on the bottom of a boot party oh yeah, Romper Stomper and now you're fucking dead.*" It's a good time all around and well worth your day's wages. (RO)
(Crowd Control Media / Last Punkrockers)

SVAVELDIOXID – "Krigets Brutalitet" EP

Fucking hell, this is absolutely classic Swedish D-beat / crust. Think *Criminal Trap*-era ANTI-CIMEX, *Soul Scars*-era DISFEAR and early

DRILLER KILLER for easy reference points. Brutal vocals, bass tuned to Z, classic fist-pumping riffs and rock-solid drumming, all wrapped up in your traditional skulls'n'war imagery. Honestly, the visual presentation is a bit underwhelming, but the record itself is hot fire. The crushing mid-tempo stomp of "Extrem Realism" will have you moshing your fucking living room within six bars, guaranteed. It's been awhile since I've heard a Swedish crust record this good. Fans of the genre need to jump on this immediately. (AU)
(Phobia)

TARANTÜLA – "I Live Free" EP

Yes, there was already one "Return of CÜLO," but TARANTÜLA is three of four CÜLO members returning to playing music together, and the multi-year wait was worth every stupid second. The nihilistic, irreverent vibe is definitely still present, but the musical direction has shifted towards a cool and relatively unique mid-paced, possibly goth-influenced hardcore sound that's as hard-hitting as it is danceable. You get the same barked vocals, this time over repetitive, bleak yet catchy riffs via a saturated guitar sound, nice scuzzy bass tone that stands out, and tight drumming that moves everything along nicely. If your only medication (is other people's medication), I got all the Depakote you want if you tour out here. (DG)
(Lengua Armada)

TRAUMA HARNESS – "Ghost of a Flea" EP

Solidly Midwestern, but traversing all the corners of '80s new wave and whatever could be considered as such. It seems the band bursts into a different era from one side of the record to the next: guitar, bass, and drums on the first side are ditched for full-on synth wall on the flip. As if GARY NUMAN was a confused emo teen, bouncing from the sprawling power pop of "Ghost of a Flea" to the ultra-sloppy NERVOUS GENDER riffage of side B. (MM)
(Lumpy)

UK GOLD – "Auto Responder" EP

UK GOLD are a three piece band from Olympia, WA. They sound very '90s. The four songs on this EP have a lo-fi beat with a grunge attitude. There are simple rhythms mixed with dissonant noise. It's catchy in a odd way. (CK)
(self-released)

VIDEO ROUGE – "Little Red Book / Total Destruction"

I wouldn't say I'm a huge fan of ska, but I definitely like the good stuff. And the A-side of this one is the good stuff. It's mid-tempo and mellow, with just enough horns to let you know that it's ska, but not so much that they knock you over the head with it. Throw in the fact that the lyrics are clever and funny and you've got a winner. The B-side is a new wave number with a prominent bass line. This doesn't just sound old school, it is old school—released in 1980, this is a warehouse deadstock find! (KK)
(Richmond)

VOTZCO – "Run Away / Gills Besson" EP

Two songs of messy pop punk. Not messy like they can't play, but messy like that's the sound. They are up-tempo songs with gruff, tunefully screamed vocals that are a bit buried by the two super blown-out guitars that keep it sounding big and do a pretty good job of covering up the lack of bass. It's catchy, it's bouncy, and it really benefits from the casual guitar shredding that blends in well, managing to not completely overrun the rest of the music. (PA)
(Debauch Mood)

WARTRIBE – "In the City" EP

Bay Area punk rock / Oi! band with folks from PELIGRO SOCIAL, SUICIDE BOMB, and more. Bouncy bass lines and single note guitar melodies with gruff vocals don't add much to an established formula, but this is done well. Favorite songs are "Dead Romantic" and "Guilty." "Dead Romantic" is a total earworm complete with CLASH-style ring out / breakdown towards the end. "Guilty" begins with a fun little piano ditty. This is good time music and, though there are no lyrics included, I'm guessing they are political in nature, knowing their singer Dustin. (JC)
(Crowd Control Media)

WAR WITH THE NEWTS – "Dead Eyes" CD

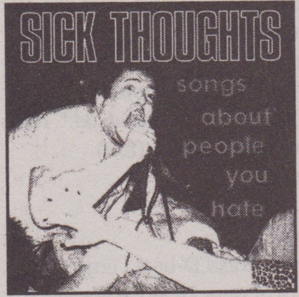
Self proclaimed "grunge" from Germany, or maybe that's a promo joke. A relatively new band, these guys do go for a screaming heavy sound. There are only four songs here, reminiscent of MUDHONEY and SOUNDGARDEN. When they really get to screaming this has a REFUSED feel. Decent songs that seem to hit the mark of their influences. (RL)
(self-released)

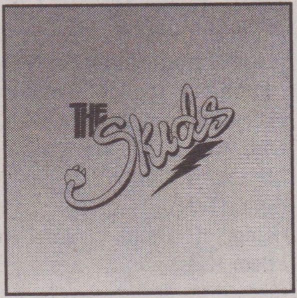
WICCANS – "Sailing A Crazy Ship" LP

If this had been recorded in 2004 and mailed to Manic Ride on CD-R, I'd say there's a 50/50 chance that he would've put it out. It's primarily decent early '80s-style USHC with periodic '70s rock / psych elements, including a few parts that definitely sound borrowed from certain bands that have combined these two things in the past. The vocalist sounds like he's gasping for air, possibly in the sea or ocean. The record as a whole isn't necessarily cohesive, but the songs are interesting and go places, just like the cover art's crazy ship. While the toompa of "Under The Sun" makes me remember that the year is 2017, a lot of this LP sounds like something that would've come out a decade ago. (DG)
(Dull Tools)

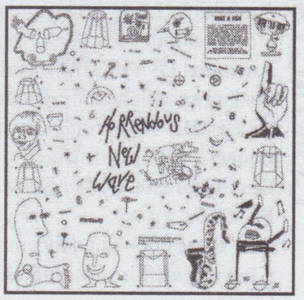
WOTZIT – "Kiiiro" 10"

I dislike the ten-inch format and have a policy of not inviting new ones into my home to mess with my filing system. I may make an exception for this new WOTZIT record, a vinyl issue for their two tape releases of the 2015–16 skronking season. Frantic, frenetic *Death To Trad Rock* punk from Tokyo—shards of SHRUBS, BIG FLAME, DAWSON, and STRETCHHEADS records scatter the floor as bits and pieces are krazy-glued together into a relentless maelstrom of noise





GHOST OF A FLEA



and drive. Guitar-parts announce themselves with a Daltrey stutter only to change direction and become something else, but it all happens so seamlessly you can't see the join. (AM)
(Debauch Mood)

XYLITOL – "Is Toxic to Pigs??" EP

I don't know whether Xylitol is toxic to pigs, but I do know that XYLITOL will answer the eternal question: Are You Punk Or Norm? Six songs of devastating mutated pogo hardcore that takes posers like FILTH to task, to say nothing of the rest of Olympia, fronted by someone who sounds like the goblin she's invoking in "Goblin Gallop." This is the rare punk band with lyrics that are actually worth taking in; they are as witty, funny, and well-rhymed as they are pointed and cutting. If you are a dude, please read the lyrics to "(I Don't Wanna Be) Punished" as many times as needed in order to quit being a goddamn punisher if any of it applies to you. In fact, if you possess the self-awareness to wonder if any of the songs might be about you, please do the same. On the other hand, if you're sick of the cool guy hardcore illuminati (you know who you are), this is the band you've been waiting for. (DG)
(Thrilling Living / Total Negativity)

V/A – "Horrendous New Wave" LP

I have always wanted to do this! Make a compilation of bands that only exist in order to be on the compilation, sometimes different combinations of the same people, sometimes different groups of humans in various locations etc. Lumpy made it happen! It's deeply goofy and will make your summer turn into fall in an abundance of chemical colors and flavors! There are a few songs that will shift your lives into a gentle but toxic meltdown—the back to back hit avalanche created by SHUX's anthem "I Don't Wanna Inside Toilet" and WESTERN CIV's "Blister Pack Outreach Program" is one for the ages, or at least every mixtape you are planning on making. The hysteria in my household after listening to SPIRITUAL HEADLOCK will be hard to repeat. The rest of the comp is not as psychically exciting but those tracks were worth the price of admission. There's even a song about unsubscribing to the very magazine you are holding because of boredom and the geek shitworkers! Like the one writing this review! Thanks, Lumpy! We can't all be hotties from the Midwest. Maybe getting this will bring you one step closer to the dream, though. (LG)
(Lumpy)

V/A – "Rumble In Washington" CD

If the phrase "a psycho sonic punkabilly voodoo garage tribute to the WASHINGTON DEAD CATS" don't make you vomit in your mouth even just a little bit, then go ahead and pop this compact disc comp in your stereo and fucking go apeshit, you assholes. There's not much noteworthy here, unless you're a huge fan of "insert funny word here-a-billy," modern horror punk, stand up bass, reverbed out the ass vocals, or similar garbage. There's even a little ska mixed up in here for you diehard skankabilly types! Fuck fuck fuck! (DZ)
(Be Fast!!!)

V/A – "Steel Evening Silent Floor" CD

Dunno if this is considered a comp or a four-way split, but the bands are EXCUSE TO TRAVEL, JAGINGIR., DANCEBEACH, and ADA. EXCUSE TO TRAVEL play Warped Tour-ready melodic punk with plenty of soaring guitar parts that would probably get mischaracterized as "emo" by people who came of age in the last decade. Objectively, it's quite good, and brings to mind being under 21 and going on life-changing journeys. JAGINGIR. play two songs of awkward, earnest alternative rock with a jangly yet big guitar sound and a singer who can't quite hit the high notes he's trying for, followed by a six-minute dirge and a shorter late BLACK FLAG dissonant number. DANCEBEACH sound like if the REFUSED were a bar punk band. ADA occupies the musical territory between emo and early alternative rock, with a vocalist that yells sporadically, and sometimes rarely, on their four songs. (DG)
(Hardcore Kitchen)

V/A – "Typical Girls, Volume 2" CD

The first version of this was an incredible survey of the female-identified and -fronted underground, and dare I say this one is even better? A cool thing about these comps is that there's not just one idea of what a woman can be or sound like! There's such a good range of what is happening in the wider DIY community. BENT from Australia are wild no wave skronkers. Immediately after you get hit with the dreamsicle power pop garage stomp of MIDNITE SNAXXX, a double punch of "fuck yes!" that indicates this compilation is one for the collection! Post-punk ice courtesy of COLD BEAT and the snottier JUANITAS Y LOS FEOS, further art punk incantations from NAKED LIGHTS, and the dark wave of LEVITATION. If you like things rowdier there's BLACK ABBA's crazed '60s monster movie / '80s Masque band slumber party sound, then snot rock from NEIGHBORHOOD BRATS, and the WORLD's charming and off-kilter wildness—MODETTES meets the SELECTOR?! FLESH WORLD offer my favorite song from their last LP which will leave you panting for their next one (arriving this fall!) Jess's vocals make me wanna be a MARINE GIRL and a JOSEF K. SOFT TUG are wild art destruction of minds and hearts with a singer that is somewhere between KATHLEEN HANNA and BETH DITTO. I hate it when every female punk band gets attached to Kathleen as it seems so lazy and rote, but this human has that kind of incendiary, for-the-ages punk rock dream come true vocal style to die for! Speaking of punk rock dream come true, SEX STAINS have a killer track on here that will make you happy ALLISON WOLFE is still blessing the airwaves with her devastating lyrics and vocal stylings. SUSS CUNTS make me think of Crass Records, smart and angry. MOSS LIME make amazing lazy dream post-punk that makes me think of LIZZIE MERCIER DESCLOUX / 99 Records and ALLISON STATTON at the same time. Then PATSY offer evidence that their first 45 was truly one of the great 45s! Dangerhouse Records outtake?! *Eat it!!!!* SKINNY GIRL DIET are an amazing band to watch, and play insane falling apart grrrrunge!! I think a lot of the songs are from already released records, but this is a great way of hearing music from all over the world in many styles in one place. (LG)
(Emotional Response)

CONTACTS

Andalucia Uber Alles: andaluciauberalles.blogspot.com
Anthems Of The Undesirable: theundesirable.bigcartel.com
Be Fast!!!: virgaphil@live.fr
Beast: beastrecords.free.fr
Bloody Master: 10 N Main St, Gainesville, FL 32601
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Chocolate Chin: awefulkanawful.bandcamp.com
Cleopatra: 11041 Santa Monica Blvd #703, Los Angeles, CA 90025, cleopatrarecords.com
Concrete Jungle: concretejunglerecords.com
Crowd Control Media: 8504 Firestone Blvd #391, Downey, CA 90241, crowdcontrolmedia.net
Crust War: 1-28-3A, Shikitu-Nishi 2 Naniwa-Ku, Osaka City 556-0017, JAPAN
Danger Collective: frenchvanilla.bandcamp.com
Debauch Mood: debauchmood@gmail.com
Evil Tone: theeviltwin.bandcamp.com
Fat Wreck Chords: 2196 Palou Ave, San Francisco, CA 94124, fatwreck.com
Feral Kid: feral-kid-records.bandcamp.com
Fine Tuning!: hajime@wj8.so-net.ne.jp
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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(AT) Alex Turner
(BA) Mike Battleaxe
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JB) Julia Booz
(JR) Jason Ryan
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael De Toffoli
(RS) Ramy Silyan

AGGRAVATED ASSAULT – *Homicidal* – The letter that accompanied this says that this is an old NYHC band's demo from about 25 years ago. I guess there were some members of well-known bands associated with these guys as well. That's all good, but this ain't great. It's heavy on the metal, sloppy crossover, and not in a good way. The one thing I do like about them is their vocals, because they have kind of an early death metal sound to them. I'd still pass on this though. (BA) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, $1 PPD, Ghoul, 554 2nd Avenue, 2nd Floor, Troy, NY 12182)

AGGRAVATED ASSULT – *The Struggle* – Here are two new songs from the aforementioned NYHC band. I tried to look them up online, but all I found was some white power band with the same name. Bummer. Anyway…this one is two New York metalcore songs. The first one is about the struggle and the other is about NYC. They aren't great, but at least they're not Nazis. (BA) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, $2 PPD, Ghoul, 554 2nd Avenue, 2nd Floor, Troy, NY 12182)

BORN UPSET – *Fuck the Social Fact* – Really appreciating the sex-positive / relationship-negative jam with the lyric "*Your life story isn't important to me / don't bring anything into my life except condoms / they get so damn expensive.*" This band jumps all over the place with their sound, at times screamy and unhinged noise mixed with harmonized crooning over power chords. They call milk "pus-y water" in "Milk is Gross" and cleverly use a plaintive scream response to every inquiry of which milk is preferred. MOLDY PEACHES, LIZ PHAIR, and YOUR HEART BREAKS fans to the front desk. (JB) (17-song cassette, some lyrics included, cosmonautmusicpdx.bandcamp.com)

BROTHER – *MA Glory Demo* – This sounds exactly like CHARLES BRONSON and RICE! No, no, YOUTH OF TODAY and IRON LUNG! Powerviolence, with lots of samples and sluggy knuckle-dragging moments galore. Then they blast off! This is only two people, who (according to the bandcamp hashtags) are married! Fast and ruthless! Fucking badass beatdown tape. (JR) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, maglory.bandcamp.com)

DEAD HORSES – *Ballad for Losers* – Groovy, blues-influenced rock'n'roll from Bologna, Italy with catchy guitar leads and haunting vocals. The tape artwork has a very punk visual aesthetic, but the music sounds like free and freaky '60s garage rock mixed up with an acoustic VIOLENT FEMMES song. There are also some slow, brooding country-influenced jams and clean plucky guitar solos that could easily sneak unnoticed onto a GRATEFUL DEAD live recording. I think we're at a point in punk where it's OK to admit we know what that band sounds like, right? Definitely something to check out for fans of southern country revival bands like PINE HILL HAINTS or CROOKS AND NANNIES. (HB) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, mapledeathrecords.bandcamp.com)

DON'T ASK – *Phil's Like, a Demo* – Twangy punk backed up by clear, clean guitars and straightforward drums with alternating singers. When Ian sings it reminds me at points of Doug Martsch in the earliest BUILT TO SPILL stuff, and occasionally like HICKEY, with raspy and plaintive tunes. When Lourdes sings it's a soulful mix of clever, troubled poetic asides. This demo could sound fuller with doubled guitars, or if the guitars were just louder in the mix. Even with Lourdes' powerful vocals it sounds thin throughout and isn't comparable to seeing them live. (JB) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, dontask1.bandcamp.com)

FUZZLERS – *Gourd of Truth* – This is a combo of lots of seemingly conflicting elements: dirty, lo-fi synth beats, artsy sound bites, fast punk songs, and weirdly sexual artwork ("you used to be cum and now you must become"). It's like those times you got in someone's car 'cause all your friends were doing it and ended up kind of trapped, going for a ride through unfamiliar freaky places, and maybe a stranger reached in the window and shoved some drugs up your nose. (HB) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, thefuzzlers.bandcamp.com)

GARBAGE GREEK – *Thank You for Choosing Evil* – This one is a period piece, '60s / '70s psychedelic garage from Columbus, Ohio. Their songs are catchy and groovy, with stony guitars all over the place. Kind of like a pop-oriented STOOGES. I like these guys, but none of their songs really go anywhere. It's like one riff per song? That's not enough, man! (BA) (14-song cassette, lyrics not included, garbagegreek.bandcamp.com)

GOOLAGOON – *Life of Crime* – Top tier fastcore / powerviolence from Boston that would fit neatly on the early '00s 625 Thrashcore roster. Thick wall-of-guitar with kick and snare just barely piercing through accompanied by strained, Springa-styled hollers. Not typically my bag but this shit is undeniably fierce. Over in a jiffy and just as effective the second time around. Ace. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, goolagoonhc.bandcamp.com)

HIGH ART – Noisy-ish surf rock that has a garage-y vibe. The songs are fun and would go great while lounging around the house, or at a block party…or maybe at a pool party? The melodies are really nice and catchy but for the most part this tape sounds like the same song four times in a row. (RS) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, hiart.bandcamp.com)

HYENA – *Demo 2017* – Rampant crust D-beat that teeters on epic hardcore while remaining in the realm of traditional old school crusty hardcore. Thinking DISRUPT, INFEST, STATE OF FEAR, HOLY MOUNTAIN. Blistering riffs and volcanic changes throughout. Dismal and stinging. I like the worn out sound of the vocals and the repetitive riffs that go on a bit too long. Play loud for baby. (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, scavengerofdeathrecords.bandcamp.com)

L.U.U.M. – *Not if… But When? Not Who… But How?* – This is an old school sounding US hardcore band that lies somewhere between the DEAD KENNEDYS, and Orange County. It's always nice to hear a band playing the classic style, and doing it right. If you want some bullshit-free punk fucking rock, check this out. (BA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, lamentrecords.bigcartel.com)

MISSION CREEP – Gritty D.C.-based darkwave post-punk with a healthy dose of sass and DIY sensibilities. The lyrics and vocal delivery switch between an apathetic, disillusioned, punk femme singer to a theatrical, affected, almost Ian Curtis style singer, and the songwriting has something in common with Midwestern darkwavers AUTONOMY. Pretty much everything you are looking for in a gothy post-punk band that's got its DIY punk roots showing but also isn't shy about showing off some flashy, synth-based, infectious pop riffs. (HB) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, missioncreepdc.bandcamp.com)

MOXIE – Furious and relentless hardcore delivered at breakneck speeds. The vocals are distorted and a little buried in the mix. There are moments of unexpected guitar decisions and deranged scream-singing where it sounds like if RUDIMENTARY PENI were a hardcore band. One of the first punk ideas I fell in love with was embracing and celebrating the parts of yourself judged to be abject, disgusting, and unacceptable by the outside world. This band's lyrics and sound explore that territory in a way that is both brutally uncompromising and tender toward our unjustly devalued squishy insides. (HB) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, moxiehc.bandcamp.com)

NOPE – Pop-punk sensibilities meet mysterious guy hardcore vocals on this little gem from Winnipeg, Canada. Super bouncy and fun guitar parts, with high energy drums! Every song has a different approach and feel but there's an overall cohesiveness. It feels like the songs might be presented in chronological order of when they were written because they only seem to get better as the tape progresses. "Role Modeling" is hands-down the best track, and they end it all on an URBAN WASTE cover. (RS) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, nopewpg@gmail.com)

NO RITUAL – Stuck somewhere between TRANSISTOR TRANSISTOR, REFUSED, and obscure techno soundscapes that borrow harsh drums from NIN or MARILYN MANSON. There are instrumental interludes with some spoken samples that sound like they're lifted from old sci-fi films that offer a break from the pounding grooves and screamed vocals. This tape offers a unique reimagining of post-hardcore, and this group of people are definitely not afraid to let their industrial freak flag fly. Only thing I wish they did different was include a lyric sheet! One-hundred percent into what this band is doing. (RS) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, noritual.bandcamp.com)

OUTCRY – *2016 Tape* – I can't help but smile that this is edition 118 // 100. I thought the inclusion of an edition # was supposed to clarify scarcity and drive demand, but hey, it's a bestseller! I like this demo better than the also submitted newer one. There's more variation in the vocal lines and a discernible trend of verse-chorus with catchy moments. The guitar carries some sick leads in "War Aesthetic," a song that adds a sneering comment to punk's favorite subject. They bring DIRT to mind, along with their contemporaries in the Crass Records circle. (JB) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, crypunx@gmail.com)

OUTCRY – *2017 Tape* – While jamming this Nova Scotian band in my car I wondered if they recorded it in a haunted house. Troublingly the singer remains in one very high register that sounds like wailing indignation dripping with reverb. Not a single hook there, but the bass delivers in that department (wish it was louder in the mix!) and the lyrics have some evocative declarations. The guitar is jangly and driving and the rhythm section holds it up nicely. It sounds like FLUX OF PINK INDIANS, and they definitely borrow from the CRASS aesthetic. (JB) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, crypunx@gmail.com)

PEELING – *Rats In Paradise* – On the surface it sounds like the soundtrack to a '60s spy movie with theme songs for the hero, the evil super-villain, and the closing credits. But the two songs on the A-side alone showcase the range that this band has, between 'verbed-out coast rock art pop to gnarly, weird psych punk. PEELING has the pop mentality of a sunset at the beach but with the rush of down strumming, limbs-throwing punk rock. Calming in the way it rocks you gently, but it still definitely has a powerful undercurrent. "Intriguing" is the word that I kept coming back to and I really can't wait to hear more from this band. (MD) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, peeling.bandcamp.com)

PLOMO – *Todo Pasa* – Chicago's PLOMO remind me of ZMIV, a Dutch band from 1982. Go figure. I like the rich bass lines and militant and stiff groove within chaotic pogo-centric stomping punk sung in Spanish. I'm especially into the lunacy of "Que Te Importa Tu," a slower track in the middle of the tape. Unhinged and exhausted sounding, riveting, raw and unnerving, this is definitely one to get on. (JR) (8-song cassette, lyrics included, plomoplomoplomo.bandcamp.com)

PLURAL BEING – This is a brutal cassette, both musically and emotionally. Noise rock with a hardcore backdrop, but confident and with intelligent, almost skramz melodies. The song "Middle Aged Middle America" details how horrible it is to have to live in parts of this mundane, stale country. Other songs are about failure and distress and living a bland existence, and the darkness that grows slowly from that. They have their moments of wound up pummels that will stomp you into submission, but then they'll get down in the dirt with you. It's a very personal recording that doesn't lash out, but more confides. At times it reminded me of UNSANE's sludgy art-scum devastation, but still pull themselves up with melodies. It's like Stockholm Syndrome with your own internal struggles. (MD) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, pluralbeing.bandcamp.com)

PUBE – Ugly, strutting bedroom drum-machine punk from Philly. Short songs with oddball soundclips interspersed throughout. The cover of "We Got the Beat" makes me wish the GO-GO'S hadn't ever written it so this would just be a magical genius punk moment. This is a great sound and I keep wanting the songs to go on a little longer and have more hooks, but PUBE is not interested in pleasing me and instead just farts through a weird and delightful stream of obnoxious racket. PUBE: you sent me a torn piece of cardboard with an amazing drawing but your CD-R envelope and insert are so lacking. Get it together! (MA) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, pube.bandcamp.com, Pubert Laws, 123 Fake Street, The Moon 42069)

PURGATORY – Relentless drums that bounce between fast and faster, grinding guitars that are more textured noise than melody, dual vocals in the throaty scream and the guttural variety, and complete with that blown-out bass sound that makes your toes curl. Lyrics are straightforward and to the point, which gives this tape a real sense of urgency. PURGATORY is not reinventing the D-beat wheel by any means, but they are also not bringing it any shame whatsoever. This tape feels like it is out to set the record straight: D-beat is alive and well and it'll kick you in the ass with rolling toms and soaring guitar leads and solos. (RS) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, vex.rex@hotmail.com)

QUE LASTIMA – This tape has all the force and fury of a hardcore band but without submitting to the temptation to sacrifice nuance for the sake of intensity that has plagued so many bands since the dawn of whenever punk learned how to get really loud and really fast. The songs are creative, with guitar riffs bordering on post-hardcore and lots of cool surprises. Would be pretty sick on a bill with BORN AGAINST. Lyrics in Spanish and English address class war and resisting colonization on a personal and political level. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, que-lastima.bandcamp.com)

RECTOPLASM – *Ecopalypse* – It takes a lot of patience to listen to a six-plus-minute song and there are six of them on here, and the rest are at least four! These Aussies stick to the theme of the awful and hopeless destruction of planet Earth, as indicated by the title. Surely *MRR* readership excludes climate-change deniers so RECTOPLASM may be preaching to the choir, but one still needs to express themself in order to carry on while the ship sinks. FLIPPER and CHROME are cited as influences, which is pretty accurate, though mostly the latter. The more industrial sounding songs like "Plastic Fish" and "Gamma Shine" are most compelling, but there are some bonafide stinkers filling in the gaps. (MA) (13-song CD-R, lyrics included, rectoplasm.bandcamp.com)

SEB AND THE RHAA DICKS – *Pop Apocalyptique* – Some may think that an album spanning an array of pop / rock / folk styles is a cool idea, but this is mostly annoying. The few relatable moments remind me of BOOM BOOM KID at best, but there are so many goofy cringe-worthy moments on this—I think I'll spare you the details. I'm sure this guy brings smiles to many faces but this shit is hella dumb. (MA) (18-song CD-R, lyrics not included, radixandthesebs.bandcamp.com)

SLOW COOKER – *Another Typo* – Freaky indie punk from Buffalo, NY. There are some thoughtful grooves and catchy dueling guitar / bass riffs. There's a thread of surf or garage rock in there too, which adds some personality. The screamy, shrieking, warbly vocal style recalls sounds of early '00s Alternative Tentacles bands. If you need a heavy indie surf fix, this has your name all over it. (HB) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, slow-cooker.bandcamp.com)

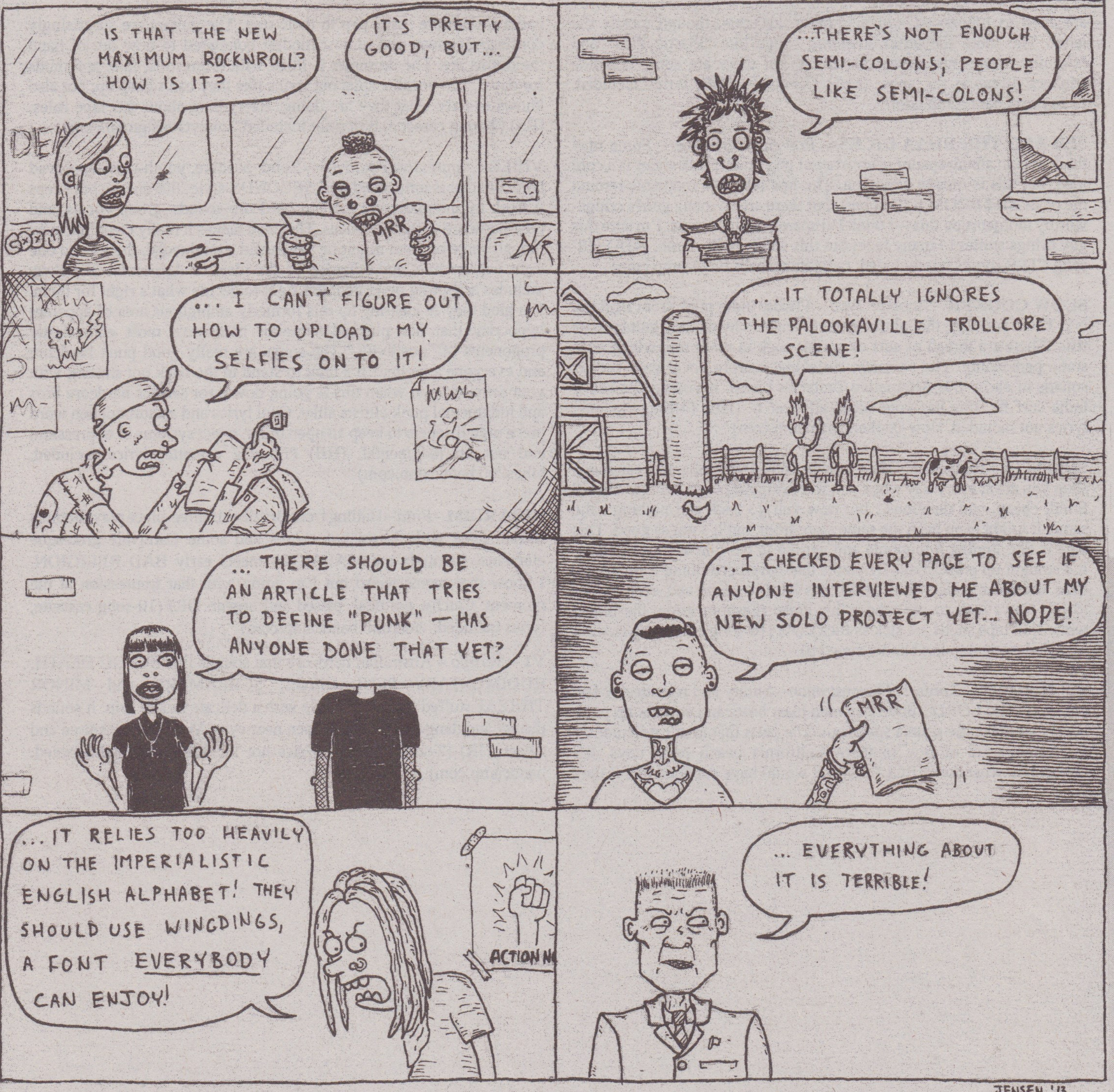
SOMATIX – *Weapons Of Mass Distraction* – Remember that sandwich shop you ate at every day when you were skipping class in high school? Solid, cheap, and delicious…but now you go back and nothing's the same. It might even been the same store front, but it's not as good. This tape is like finding a loophole and getting to eat that sandwich again. It's straight up punk, made by punks that have been doing it for a long time and these songs fill a void that's hard to name and even harder to fill. Can't wait to see where this goes. (Fashion aside, the black/ white split tape shells are sick as fuck). (AT) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, somatixpunx.bandcamp.com)

SUCK LORDS – *Lords, S. Demonstration* – Snotty and relentlessly fast punk! SUCK LORDS flows between blast beats and straight up punk beats that make me wanna spazz out. The parts that aren't ridiculously fast remind me of my Southern California beach punk days. It's almost like what the CIRCLE JERKS would have sounded like if they had a little more sassy pep to their step. The guitars are surprisingly consistently clean and almost modest compared to how out of hand the drums are. The drummer is filled with drum rolls, fills, and thuds for days. The vocalist spits out lyrics like they can't keep up, but also knows exactly what they are doing. Everything about this tape rules. (RS) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, snukytate@gmail.com)

VIBES – *Aggressive Positivity* – Solid, positive, youth-crew-approved hardcore that is influenced by 7 SECONDS-style '80s energy but keeps it fresh by incorporating modern hardcore sounds, group vocals, and posi-hardcore vocal influences. The band makes it really clear that even though some of them might be vegan and straightedge, there is no one right way to live, and adhering to the ideal of *Aggressive Positivity* includes accepting other people's right to decide what's right for them. I'm glad they're clearing up this formerly ambiguous area of apparent hypocrisy that has plagued some of hardcore's most enthusiastic proponents of "positivity." The songs are really good punk hardcore and everyone's invited! It's hard to stand in the back not smiling with your arms crossed when this is going down, for serious hardcore bros and judgmental punk elitists alike. Cool lyrics and a short-spoken word piece urge listeners to keep an open mind, reject systems of oppression, and not be judgmental. (HB) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, vibes780.bandcamp.com)

VIDARUIM – *Fitta* – Hailing from Brazil, this three-piece plays bouncy simple punk with drawn out chords and some Carnivale grotesque elements. Reminds me MALAKKA meets early BAD RELIGION. I know that seems weird but I'm going with that impression at the moment. Catchy, political, pissed and urgent. (JR) (10-song cassette, lyrics included, vidaruim.bandcamp.com)

V1 – *Vertigo* – Australian hardcore that sounds like SEPTIC DEATH, RUDIMENTARY PENI, SIEGE, SCREAMERS, and MINOR THREAT stuffed in corked bottle with a delicate model ship. It sounds distant and dangerous. Do not open near eyes. Very short, inspired and sweet. (JR) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, gonewiththeweed.bandcamp.com)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...IT TOTALLY IGNORES THE PALOOKAVILLE TROLLCORE SCENE!
... THERE SHOULD BE AN ARTICLE THAT TRIES TO DEFINE "PUNK" — HAS ANYONE DONE THAT YET?
...I CHECKED EVERY PAGE TO SEE IF ANYONE INTERVIEWED ME ABOUT MY NEW SOLO PROJECT YET... NOPE!
MRR
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(MM) Marissa Magic
(MR) Mikey Minicomix

AB #21 / OFF THE BEATEN PATH
$4 / 20 pgs

I'm a little stumped here. I have almost no idea what is going on. I think *Ab* is the zine that was enclosed here but it seems like *Off The Beaten Path* is, in this mailing, the outer pages of the whole thing. As far as I can figure out, *Off the Beaten Path* is a list of recommended zine and book resources. It blends into *Ab* because they both use the same "typewriter font filling up white page" approach. *Ab* #21 has a piece about having a wood heated tub, some stuff about the book *The New Jim Crow*, random news bits, a long piece about being a stripper, and a few short pieces about varied topics like veganism, cops, and spelling. Due to the setup of the pages everything bleeds together and it's hard to figure out what's going on or if you're even still in the same article you were just reading. Plus, a truly baffling use of symbols for certain words that I just can't really figure out. I like how I feel like I'm deciphering something when I read this, as it brings the possibilities of individual expression to the world to the zine format, but it is pretty difficult to actually read it. Recommended if you're into wingnuttery and care about intentional living and fonts—and if you have a lot of free time. (KS)

PO Box 181, Alsea, OR 97324

ALT LAB #0–2
Free / 10, 42, and 60 pgs

First three issues of what is primarily a photozine out of Bakersfield. Despite the zine medium, the photo quality looks professional or damn near it, and the layout is decent as well. All of issue #0 is outdoor skating shots, either pools or ramps. #1 is also mostly x-treme men skating, and footage of a Trash Talk music video shoot at Jerry's Pizza (I'm sure Trash Talk has not played a spot like this in years; see also that Bane music video shot in a basement). #2 has additional contributors, some of whom offer up comics and other illustrations. Some of the band / TV show puns are legitimately funny, and some of the other artwork is macho and gross and much of it seems derived from tattoo culture. The interview with tattoo artist Stan Moskowitz adds some text to the otherwise solely visual landscape, and there are more photos of people hanging out than just skating this time around. (DG)

1006 Woodmond Dr, Bakersfield, CA 93312 / josephmichaelruiz@gmail.com

DEEP FRIED #12
$1 / 16 pgs

When I was sixteen, I worked as a cashier at Hardee's. I wouldn't say I have fond memories of standing behind the register wearing the stiff visor and horrid khaki pants that were part of the uniform, nor did I relish going home every night reeking of fries and burger grease. Still, I was psyched to find a brief piece on the fast-food restaurant's history in the pages of *Deep Fried*, a zine dedicated to fast food. If you've ever worked in the quick-service industry, or if you simply enjoy junk food, you'll eat up *Deep Fried*. Besides a short history of Hardee's ("Fry vs. Fry: WTF Is the Difference Between Carl's Jr. and Hardee's?"), this issue serves up food reviews (Choco Taco, Dairy Queen's Monkey Tail), band interviews (No Parents, Beef Jerky, the Heaters), fast-food-related comics, a comparison of "Sell-ebrity Endorsements" of fast food, impassioned rants about Dairy Queen and Mountain Dew, and more. Need to satisfy a deep hunger for fast food? Come and get your fill of *Deep Fried*! (GM)

videophobia222@hotmail.com

EMPTY ORCHESTRA: YR KARAOKE DREAM ZINE #3
$2 / 42 pgs

A quick and fun read that is dedicated to one of my favorite pastimes. Arguably part perzine and part karaoke spot review, this issue chronicles the author's goodbye to Lexington, KY, her year in Jersey City (where karaoke was a major saving grace and social outlet) and her subsquent move to LA. A lot of cool stories that will appeal to anyone anyone who relishes good karaoke tales, or who can, more importantly, relate to being willing to go out of their way to find good spots, wrangle people, or politely ask if a bar can roll out their karaoke setup, with the promise of many drinks being purchased. I'll be keeping this on hand for the next time I'm out east. (DG)

neckmonster@gmail.com

FACE VALUE #1
$2 / 12 pgs

"Face-ism," according to Wiktionary, is "prejudice based on the appearance of somebody's face." Before reading this zine, I hadn't heard the term before. In her zine, Alice talks about the prejudice she faces and the emotions she deals with as a result of having a disfigured face. *Face Value* explores lookism, critiques notions of normalcy and beauty, and differentiates between "plastic surgery for vanity, and plastic surgery for necessity." Alice is open about her own plastic and cosmetic surgeries, and she urges readers to not "be afraid of what others may think of you if you need plastic surgery." While much of *Face Value* reads like it was written by an early 20-something newly radicalized by an undergraduate Feminism 101 class (complete with quotes by Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa), the zine will have value for readers who have experienced face-ism and those who are interested in knowing more about this less-talked-about form of prejudice. (GM)

weliveintrees@gmail.com

GUIDE TO BEING BROKE AND FABULOUS

$8 / 36 pgs

The title says pretty succinctly what this is about. I wish I'd read this when I was a teenager, not because I didn't find it good now but because I think aside from the general "how to deal with getting things when you are broke" that this zine covers (which feels pretty basic if you are older and have been very broke for long periods) I like the attitude: eah, life does't stop if you're hella broke, you can still be hella fabulous! I had an initial knee jerk reaction to this zine that made me load up my scoffs, but I like how empowering the language is and how pretty dead on the advice is. You got a young friend who is not versed in poverty? Or someone who just doesn't get being poor? Get them this zine, it will likely help. It's a fun read regardless. (KS)

viceversapress.com

KING-CAT #77

$5 / 40 pgs

King-Cat #77 is a black and white zine of comics about childhood memories of animal encounters and current farm life in Illinois, broken up in the middle with a letters section, a moving tribute to the author's recently deceased cat, and a list of nicknames for animals they have (I really get that one). The comics are simple but pleasant in the art and the subject matter is a nice life-affirming recounting of curiosity about the wonders of small animals. I think if you are having a busy and anxious day you should treat yourself to *King-Cat* #77. It's a good zine, and a great reminder of simple but important pleasures and experiences of a slower pace life. (KS)

PO Box 142, South Beloit, IL 61080 / spitandahalf.com

LEVANDE BEGRAVD #6

€5 / 30 pgs

A great fanzine—emphasis on fan—if you're either already a nerd about the stuff covered herein or you're looking for some quality music to find out about and get into. The interview with Thomas Savage, who did a zine and shows under said moniker, along with the label Push My Buttons, reads like two old friends reminiscing and catching up. Paul Messis of the Suburban Homes, and Mascara Snakes are also interviewed, and the record reviews offer up good, critical writing that's kind of lengthy without being too wordy, and does a great job of describing the feeling records put forth, with just the right amount of hyperbole. The real treats of this fanzine are the guide to oddball Swedish punk, which seems to span a musical range of freak sounds, along with the interview with Läjä Äijälä about his non-Terveet Kädet bands, which includes industrial, noise, and fucked-up psychobilly stuff. I will be definitely be hanging onto this zine and digging through the *MRR* collection with it. (DG)

levandebegravd1@gmail.com

SHUT UP AND LISTEN #6

$5 / 36 pgs

Printed in Bloomington, Indiana, *Shut Up and Listen* is a zine about "music, art, and literature" with a definite femme focus. On the cover of Issue #6 is rap artist and poet Noname, and inside are profiles of more music makers, including Baltimore-based punks Flasher, electro-pop duo Psychic Twin, and indie-rock trio Lala Lala. This makes for some seriously great zine reading, but perhaps the crown jewel of this issue is the interview with Kelley Deal (yes, *that* Kelley Deal, of the Breeders), a true rock'n'roll legend. So, like, maybe I should start a zine so I can interview my rock heroes? The emphasis of *Shut Up and Listen* is on women in music, but the zine also features articles on artists and illustrators, such as Julia Wertz and Yaeji. Concluding this great zine are "Events You Missed" (a wrap-up of femme-fronted shows in the Bloomington area) and "Upcoming Events" (a list of shows and literary events to catch). *Shut Up and Listen* will have you sitting down and reading it from cover to cover. (GM)

shutupandlisten.bigcartel.com

SOMETHING FOR NOTHING #74

2 stamps / 40 pgs

I always get stoked when I see a super long running zine. Although not the most consistent of publications, this has been around since the late '80s. This issue is almost fully devoted to the output of the Violent Femmes, a band I hold dear. Their entire catalog is dissected and, although it's a little too thorough, it's pretty tight. Every instrument switch, every new direction, each member change, all duly noted. There was a little too much unnecessary information included, like how much the tape cost at the mall versus how much they had to drop on the CD a few years later at the same chain store, and how each particular song made them feel. I would have thoroughly enjoyed all this energy and space devoted to one particular album, but thirteen albums is a lot to grasp in this tiny awesome cramped zine. There's also not just one, but two rants on *The Feeding of the 5000*, cool beverage reviews, zine reviews, and eating establishment reviews. There's a page that's either anti-abortion or anti-Christmas which I didn't read because I remembered the author mentioned being Christian and I didn't want to hear it. Sorry. Besides that, this was a solid as hell read. (DZ)

PO Box 266, Massilon, OH, 44648

WHO ARE THE TERRORISTS? / PUNISHING THE POOR.

Free / 8 pgs

Mission Mini Comix are absolutely great. Short, well-drawn, fun, and informative, these comics are a great thing to give to someone who you want to make laugh or make think. I'm very partial to *Punishing the Poor* and the solving homelessness one, as they are written by folks who get the hypocritic and self defeating approach of the powers that be towards homelessness in San Francisco. Do you have a friend or family member who doesn't really get what you are trying to tell them about terrorism in America? Give them *Who are The Terrorists?* It's short and informative and a great conversation starter. Let's all support Mission Mini Comix, they do great stuff and you can get the stuff for free—but you can donate too! (KS)

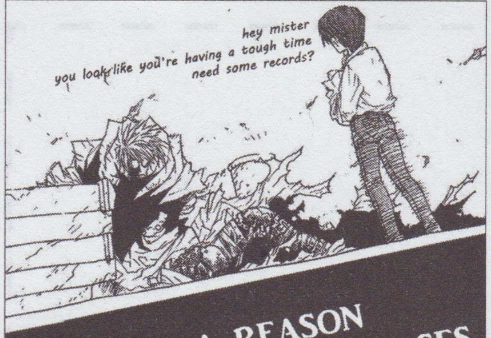
missionminicomics.com

X-AMERICAN YOUTH

$2 / 12 pgs

The people behind the first issue of *X-American Youth* are doing the much-needed work of bringing together stories of immigrants and First and Second Generation Americans. What's so cool about this zine is that its creator gathered stories from sources across varying ages, races, genders, and experiences. This is what the "X" in *X-American* signifies—there is no one word to label the multicultural individual. I'm a sucker for poetry and personal reflections, and that's pretty much what you get in here, but I think the authors should go more in-depth in sharing their experiences. A couple of the stories rely too heavily on vague language and platitudes. The whole zine could be more clearly designed, with details about each piece and its author. I would definitely want to check out a second issue of *X-American* that takes its theme of storytelling as far as it can go. (GJ)

madebynatdejesus@gmail.com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EPs by Illya (Japan)
"Burning Spirits" hardcore
Thisclose (Scotland)
The Grave New Beat
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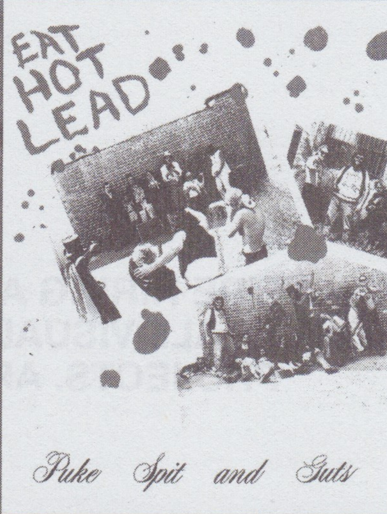

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